

Letters from the Pacific slope; or First impressions. By Harvey Rice

LETTERS

FROM THE

PACIFIC SLOPE;

OR

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

BY

HARVEY RICE.

NEW YORK:

D. APPLETON & COMPANY,

90, 92 & 94 GRAND STREET.

1870.

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1870, by HARVEY RICE,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Northern District of Ohio.

III

CONTENTS. LETTER I. PAGE. From Lake Erie to the Rocky Mountains 5 LETTER II. From the Rocky Mountains to Salt Lake Valley 12 LETTER III. Salt Lake—The City—Polygamy 20 LETTER IV. The Tabernacle—Worship—Proselytes 27 LETTER V. Reno—Washoe—Carson City 36 LETTER VI. Society in Carson—Visit to Lake Tahoe 43 LETTER VII. Stage Ride—Lake Donner—Sacramento 50 LETTER VIII. From Sacramento to San Francisco—The City 59 LETTER IX. Sand-Hills—Windmills—Chinese—Climate 67 IV LETTER X. Churches—Nationalities—Fruits—Cliff House 77 LETTER XI. A Drive—Oakland—Alameda—Earthquake 85 LETTER XII. Sea Voyage to Los Angeles—Ranch Life 93 LETTER XIII. Anaheim—Its Vineyards—San Diego 102 LETTER XIV. Suspicious Passenger—Los Angeles—San Bernardino 110 LETTER XV. Return Voyage—Earthquake Theory—Asiatics 119 LETTER XVI. Yosemite—Big Trees—Geysers—Nature 127

LETTER I.

SHERMAN, September 23d, 1869.

The time has been when a journey overland to California partook of the marvelous. But now the trip has lost its former import, and amounts to little more than a pleasure excursion. And yet it is really a marvel, that we can now traverse a vast continent in seven or eight days, instead of consuming seven or eight months, as was done by the early emigrants. In fact, the only difficulty to be overcome, now, is simply—to start. We started—myself and wife—in September, 1869; the year made memorable by the completion of the great trans-continental railway.

In what I may have to say, you will probably recognize but little that is new; for I am well aware that this is a reading age, and that almost everybody is more or less familiar with the leading characteristics of the Pacific Slope. Yet it is possible my impressions of the golden land may serve to amuse you, if they should not instruct.

From the Southern Shore of Lake Erie to Council Bluffs, the general aspect of the country is somewhat monotonous, being for the most part a rich alluvial plain of vast extent, enlivened by

cultivated fields and small farm-houses, and begemmed here and there with infant villages and pretentious young cities. The railroad bridge which spans the Mississippi and connects Rock Island with Davenport, is a splendid structure, about two miles long.

On arriving at Council Bluffs, formerly the limit of western civilization, we found ourselves ushered into a new region, seeming not only strange, but peculiar in its geological formation. The bluffs consist of a collection of conical sand-hills, barren in appearance, yet graceful in outline. They look like a platoon of grenadiers drawn up in military attitude to protect from invasion the rich valleys of the Missouri. We passed them unchallenged. The town derives its name from the fact that the explorers, Lewis and Clarke, in 1804, held a council here with the Indians. The place has now become a city, containing about twelve thousand inhabitants. Her citizens, it is said, regard Omaha, which is situated on the western bank of the river, as an intrusive rival, and often speak of her, ironically, as “a twin sister” born too late in life to take precedence in the commercial circle of that country.

Yet Omaha is equally plucky, and entertains no fears of being eclipsed, though born as late as 1854. She has a population of nearly twenty thousand. When the railroad bridge across the Missouri is completed, she will keep her foot in the stirrup, and continue to advance with a still higher degree of self-assurance. The distance between the two cities is four miles. The river is about a mile wide, turbid and treacherous. We were transferred on a steam ferry boat, keeping our seats in the omnibus the meantime; and were deposited like so much freight, unceremoniously, at the grand depot of the Pacific road in Omaha. Here we found the train, consisting of eight passenger cars, ready and waiting with steam up to receive us. In “the twinkling of an eye” our party was thrust on board, bag and baggage, when the whistle gave the signal, and the impatient steam-horse snuffed the air with a spasmodic puff, and then took to his heels, headed for the Rocky Mountains. In leaving Omaha, we left the old “Far West” behind us, which, by the people on the Pacific coast, is now called the “Far East.” In the progress of the age the Far West has been obliterated, and is now nowhere to be found. The great Platte River Valley upon which we now entered, running with almost lightning speed, presents one of the most beautiful and lovely landscapes, at this season of the year, that I ever beheld,—a vast sweep of level plains, waving with tall grass and wild flowers, and dotted, for

the first fifty miles, with corn fields, stubble fields, shorn meadows, and humble cabins. In point of soil it is a rich country, but deficient in its supplies of living water, as well as entirely destitute of timber.

While in the Platte Valley, we were suddenly overtaken by a terrific thunder storm, attended with a violent wind and rain. The storm occurred in the early part of the evening, and continued for an hour or more. It seemed as if the artillery of Heaven had been brought into conflict, firing by regiments in every direction. We could see the electric fluid roll like cannon balls down the sky and over the vast plains. The scene was as sublime as it was terrific, and awed every passenger into silence. But in the morning, after the storm had passed, all nature seemed regenerated, and looked as beautiful as a young bride at her marriage festival.

Though you may imagine that these plains must appear monotonous and unattractive, yet in proceeding westward you see many things that constantly interest you, novel sights of a singular character, accompanied with more or less amusing incidents. As we flew steaming and puffing over this silent and uninhabited region, we frequently startled herds of antelope feeding near the wayside, who ran, bounding gracefully over the plain, until lost in the distance. In one instance we saw two bears walking leisurely amid the sage-brush, within two hundred rods of the train, and seeming to care for nothing but themselves. We also passed through many villages whose only denizens are prairie dogs, a very pretty little animal, resembling the fox squirrel, and about the same size. They play, frolic, and bark within a stone's throw of the passing cars. Their houses are built of sand cemented with clay, and located near each other with narrow intervening streets, and are entered through a circular doorway. They are conical in structure and resemble potato-hills. The flesh of these animals is delicate. At one of the stations our breakfast table was furnished with a dish of prairie dog in the form of a stew. We were often regaled with antelope steaks at other stations—a kind of meat which we very much preferred, and which most of the passengers regarded as perfectly delicious.

As we approached what is called the Rocky Mountain range, we kept a sharp lookout for the 10 mountains, with the expectation of catching a sublime view of their lofty grandeur. But in vain. We

arrived at Sherman, the highest point in the route, an elevation of more than eight thousand feet above the level of the sea, before we became conscious of having reached even their base. The truth is, the Rocky Mountains, in the direction of the railway, are but a myth—nothing but an elevated plain on a vast scale, with here and there a low range of cobble-stones embedded in bluffs, which look like the bank of a dried up river whose opposite bank has been removed, or lost in the even surface of the adjoining plain. The grade over this elevated plain, both the ascent and descent, for the whole distance, is so easy that in passing you would scarcely perceive it. The country produces little else than sagebrush and a few dwarf pines.

The town of Sherman, at present, but a station, is located on the very apex of the Rocky Mountains, the backbone of a continent, five hundred and fifty miles west of Omaha. The atmosphere is so clear that you can see Pike's Peak looming up in the south, at a distance of one hundred and sixty-five miles. The town is indebted to General Sherman for its name, who is the tallest, and I might say, the bravest and most gallant general that held a commission in the 11 Union army, during the Rebellion. His famous “march to the sea” has immortalized his name, and added a brilliant page to the history of his country.

LETTER II.

UINTAH, September 25th, 1869.

It was at Sherman that we commenced our descent down the Pacific Slope. From that point which is the continental watershed, the waters divide and flow in opposite directions, west to the Pacific, and east to the Atlantic ocean. The descent is like the ascent, so gradual that you would scarcely perceive it. The Black Hills are to be seen in the distance, which take their name from the fact that they are clad with pines, giving them a dark and gloomy appearance. It is a wild region, the favorite domain of still wilder Indians, who, in addition to their pastimes of hunting and fishing, frequently attack and plunder emigrant trains and other parties of white men passing through the country. Not long since a skirmish occurred near here between the Indians and a detachment of soldiers, who had been sent out from the Fort for the purpose of recovering stolen horses. In the encounter

three Indians and one white man were killed. Soon after passing Sherman, we were overtaken by a freakish snow storm, the first of the season, which whitened the ground to the depth of two or three inches. The country here assumes a new aspect, being diversified with a multitude of rounded hills as naked as when born into the world, and yet resembling the ruins of old dilapidated cities. Here and there you will recognize among them a hill still retaining the perfect outline of an old church of the gothic style, an ancient castle perhaps of the feudal age, or a weather-beaten farmhouse, such as were built in early days by the New England Puritans. It would seem as if Nature, tired of waiting for man, had here undertaken to build cities on her own account, and had succeeded.

In this direction there is a plenty of wild game, antelope, elk, black tailed deer, bear, grouse, sage hens, with an abundance of fish in the lakes and rivulets. In the summer it is a perfect paradise for sportsmen, and so healthful that a dyspeptic could not die if he would, unless he should resort to medicine. Here Nature heals the sick and works miracles, and is too benevolent to charge a fee for it.

Lake Como, which lies near the road and in full view, is a beautiful sheet of water, nearly two miles long by one wide, and contains five or six excellent varieties of fish. It is also a favorite locality for ducks. At Carbon Station, a little west from here, was discovered the first mineral coal found on the line of the Pacific Union Road. The coal is abundant and of excellent quality, and is now mined and shipped to eastern towns in large quantities. Coal mines of equal value have since been discovered at different points along the road, some of which are now worked with remunerating success.

At Bitter Creek, you reach a locality which has been made famous in the annals of the early emigrants. The water is so strongly impregnated with alkali, that neither man nor beast can drink it with safety. The banks of the creek are marshy and dangerous of approach, with evidences of coal oil floating on the surface. The whitened bones of horses and cattle and of man, that are still to be seen along this valley, sufficiently indicate the route pursued in former years by emigrants and freighters. They often arrived here, overcome with thirst; drank from necessity and died. After leaving the valley of this modern Merah, we soon glided into the valley of Green River. Much of

the way the bluffs are bold and precipitous. Not far away, on the Sweetwater 15 River, gold mines have been discovered, which are said to be rich, and which are now worked with considerable success. And now as we proceed, the hills and bluffs often approach within a few rods of the track, presenting a perpendicular front of naked wall, composed of sandstone, and laid up in range-work, like solid masonry. These walls are in some instances hundreds of feet high, and look as if built in the days when there were "giants on the earth." The Church Buttes are so called, because they resemble churches. They are simply earth elevations, having a church-like outline, larger than hills, yet smaller than mountains, which have arisen, without regard to order, out of the surface of an extensive plain. On first view they surprise the beholder and rivet his attention like a passing panorama of wonders. The moss-agates, which are so prized when polished and wrought into jewels for the ear, breast, and fingers, abound here, and along the whole line of the road from Green River to Piedmont. They are found lying loose on the top of the bluffs, and within the crevices of the rocks where the winds have blown away the sand. They are probably the result of volcanic or electrical heat, and were originally formed in the sandstone rocks, where they still lie embedded in large numbers. How this could have occurred and the 16 agates still retain the imprint of mosses of the most delicate texture, is a marvel. We purchased a few specimens from pedlers who offer them for sale on the cars as well as at the stations.

Many of the stations take their names from some novel circumstance, or historical fact. We passed one called "Lone Tree." The tree that stands there is the only one to be seen in that region. Bridger Station takes its name from one James Bridger, who was a famous hunter in these parts, some forty years ago. Fort Bridger, not far from here, is still more famous as the military post or locality where the Mormons, led by Orson Pratt, on the 23d of November, 1857, in the night, and amid a driving snow storm, attacked and robbed the supply train on its way to the western army, commanded by General Johnson. The train had encamped for the night, and consisted of one hundred and sixty wagons, and a party of two hundred and thirty persons. The Mormons seized the supplies, and burned the wagons, and left the party to starve and die in the wilderness, a thousand miles away from the border settlements. Only eight of the party survived the winter, and they did not reach home until the next June. The Mormons feasted on the supplies in the meantime, while Johnson's

army were put on short rations. For this 17 merciless outrage the Government has never punished the Mormons, or taken official action in reference to it. Though mercy be a divine attribute, the exhibition of too much of it, as in this case, becomes not only a moral, but a political evil.

The Wahsatch Mountains are not generally large, but form a range of irregular, broken hills and peaks with bald heads, and intervening gorges, deep, dark, and sometimes fearful. It is here a desolate, silent, voiceless region of country, and like much of the country through which we have passed, produces little else than sage-brush and grease wood. In passing along Echo canyon we plunged into the bowels of one of the mountains, running through a tunnel seven hundred and seventy feet, the longest on the Pacific Union Road, and emerging into a beautiful vale, as green, fresh, and flowery as Eden. This vale is one of Nature's favorite retreats, a garden hidden away among these desolate mountains. Here she has watered the soil with perennial rills, and cultivated its flowers with a woman's hand.

Near this, we passed what is called the Castle Rocks, which overhang the railway, and tower into the sky from five hundred to two thousand feet. It is impossible to describe the beauties, wonders, and sublimities of the scene. At 18 one point, a thousand feet above the bed of the canyon which is narrowed here to a mere pathway, the Mormons in 1857, built a fortification and placed on the rim of the precipice a long line of huge stones with a view to crush Johnson's army when it should attempt to pass, by rolling the stones down on his soldiers. But for some reason they did not carry into execution this murderous scheme.

In proceeding along the river down Weber canyon, one becomes convinced that Nature graded the route with the expectation that a railway would be built here some day. By the application of some tremendous force, perhaps with nitro-glycerine, she split open the mountain range for miles, leaving the side walls just wide enough apart to admit of a free and easy passage; and to make it plain, penciled the track with Weber River. No human engineer could mistake the design, or accomplish such a work. On the bank of the river stands a tree of much interest to travelers, the solitary pine, labeled "1000 miles from Omaha," and near it you pass the "devil's slide," a narrow path down an abrupt declivity with a fence twenty feet high on each side, constructed by Nature of

huge flagging stone set edgewise in the ground. The slide descends in a straight line, and is more than a thousand feet 19 long. However slippery the descent, it is evident the devil's sled cannot fly the track. Whether he draws his sled back or slides back, I cannot say, but everybody knows he is a backslider. Very good men in the church sometimes accuse each other of the same sin. A little westward from this slide comes the "devil's gate," a fearful pass between two perpendicular rocks or gate posts, more than a thousand feet high. The gate is supposed to have been demolished when his Satanic Majesty with undue haste and violence, threw it wide open to let the Mormons pass into Salt Lake Valley. In five minutes after emerging from Weber canyon, we reached Uintah, the first station in the holy land of many wives. From here we go by stage to Salt Lake City. The distance is thirty miles.

LETTER III.

SALT LAKE CITY, September 27th, 1869.

The stage-route by which we came from Uintah to this "much married" city, winds along the base of the mountains which encircle this great valley, as if to guard it from the profane intrusion of the outside world. The dark blue waters of Salt Lake slumbered calmly on our right, and occupy a central position in the valley. It is about seventy-five miles long by ten wide. In its centre there looms up a mountain island, which gleams like an emerald set in ebony. Its outline is oval. The extensive meadow-like plains that border on the Lake are rich and beautiful, and divided into ranches occupied for the most part by Mormons. The margin of the Lake is encrusted with crystalized salt of excellent quality, which the people here generally use for domestic purposes, and which any one may shovel up and carry away by the wagon load, if he cares to do 21 so. In other words, here are Nature's salt works.

In passing around the spur of a mountain as we approached the city, we drove through the rapid current of a hot spring flowing from the mountain's base, and steaming with offensive gases, and so heated that you could not hold your hand in it. Its volume is quite large, almost a rivulet, and its waters are said to be highly esteemed for their medicinal properties. Springs of a like character

abound still nearer the city, and even within its limits, where several bathing houses have been erected to which Brigham and his disciples often resort and undergo ablutions which, I doubt not, they much need; and yet I question whether the waters, though heated to a scald, could cleanse them from their moral leprosy.

Near the city, and along the roadside, are still to be seen the dilapidated walls of several old fortifications, black as tar, and originally built ten or twelve feet high, enclosing plats of ground broad enough to accommodate an army of ten thousand men. The walls are one continuous solid mass, and appear to be constructed of cement made of gravel and asphaltum, impenetrable to musket balls. The Mormons erected these walls in 1857, as we were told, for the purpose of defending the Holy City against the crusade of the Federal troops, then in command of Gen. 22 Jonnson, who had been sent to Utah by the Government with orders to see that the laws of Congress were duly enforced.

Very soon after passing the fortifications we entered the city proper, and took lodgings at a Mormon hotel. Here we found excellent accommodations, and during our stay were treated with all the attention and politeness we could desire. We observed nothing, while at the hotel, which induced us to believe that it differed in any respect from other first class hotels; and yet, as a matter of fact, our landlord rejoiced in the possession of five wives, if joy there can be in having five times too much of a good thing. The first wife was, apparently, past middle age, wore a faded calico dress and a downcast look, and seemed unhappy. The second appeared much younger and prettier, was clad in silks and jewels, and had the general superintendence of the servants and of the household. The other three, it was said, kept house by themselves in different parts of the town, and took charge of their own children and family affairs; yet were, in fact, supported by the landlord, their common husband. How many children he has by his five wives, we did not learn, but they are said to be numerous. He is regarded as a man of wealth, and in his style of manners has the appearance of an 23 accomplished gentleman. He is a native of Maine; apparently about sixty years old, and has resided in Salt Lake City twenty years.

On Sunday we attended church, and heard Brigham Young preach. He had a full house, and appeared to be a man of much more polish and culture than I expected to see, from all I had heard said of him. His language was select, and his style of oratory earnest, talkative and sincere. He indulged in no expressions which could be regarded as inconsistent with good taste; yet when contradicted or irritated, it is said, he sometimes employs coarse and unqualified language. He evidently feels and knows that he is the acknowledged dictator and Supreme Head of the Church in Mormondom. It must be admitted that he is a shrewd tactician, decidedly foxy, and ever ready in adopting expedients. If this were not so, he could never have achieved what he has. If not a great genius, he is certainly no ordinary man. This was my impression of him at first sight. His discourse was not written, nor did he take a text, but proceeded at once to give utterance to his train of thought. If I had not known who he was, I should not have questioned the orthodoxy of his discourse, until he alluded to the subject of polygamy. In this allusion he pronounced it a divine institution, and then 24 remarked that the outside world called it his “peculiar institution.” He said there was really nothing peculiar about it, and declared that polygamy was sanctioned by both the Old and New Testament, as well as by the present customs of mankind in various parts of the civilized world. He also declared the Book of Mormon, a Divine Revelation, because he knew it to be such, asserting that the “Latter Day Saints” are the only true chosen people of God. He said all other systems of religion had failed in their object, and that the new revelation became a necessity, and is therefore the true “light of the world.” He called Christ his elder brother, and claimed the power of working miracles. In conclusion, he appealed to the women to be submissive to their condition, and urged this as a religious duty. He told them that God destined them to become the mothers of mankind, and that they were made wives and mothers in the providence of God, for the purpose of building up Zion for “Zion's sake.”

In personal appearance, Brigham is a fine looking gentleman, tall and portly, easy and selfpossessed in manner, dresses elegantly, is about seventy years of age, yet appears much younger, and weighs at least two hundred. He has more wives than pounds of flesh. If distributed 25 among them, he wouldn't go round at a pound apiece. He has wives celestial and wives terrestrial. Of the celestial there are several hundred; of the terrestrial some forty or fifty. The former are pious, confiding old

ladies, who have lost their charms, and only claim the privilege of pinning their faith to his sleeve. The latter are still possessed of considerable youth and beauty, and have the privilege of “building up Zion.” How many children Brigham really has, is not known, and it is doubtful if he knows; but they say he has somewhere from fifty to one hundred and fifty. In providing for their education, he erected especially for them a large two-story school house, which has now become too small to accommodate them. He has nineteen or twenty favorite wives, who occupy distinct dwellings in different parts of the city. He visits them occasionally, and so far as they are unable to take care of themselves, he provides for them. The salvation of every woman who marries Brigham or any of his church dignitaries, is considered absolutely certain. Hence, their system of celestial marriages embraces old women as well as young, and often women who have been in their graves for years. The nuptial ceremonies are performed in church. In marrying a deceased woman, the bridegroom appears before 26 the priest, locked arm in arm with a living wife, who consents to the nuptials, as the representative of the invisible bride; in this way the departed woman is sealed to an earthly husband in celestial marriage. The faithful, especially the widows, believe in celestial marriages; and of course are all anxious to secure their salvation by becoming sealed as celestial wives to Brigham, or to some one of his divine officials in the church. The Mormons claim that all within the pale of their church are brothers and sisters in a natural as well as spiritual sense, and therefore hold, that intermarriages without regard to the degree of consanguinity are in perfect accordance with the dictates of God and Nature. While we were in the city, a brother married his sister, as we were credibly informed.

The priesthood go so far as to say that father and daughter, mother and son, may, without violating either natural or divine law, intermarry, if they choose. Such is polygamy in its tendency and in its most revolting form. Is there no remedy? The time is rapidly approaching, I trust, when this corroding stain, this foul plague-spot on our national escutcheon, will be forever obliterated, and that too, without the hope of a resurrection. And yet what can be done, or what will be done, remains to be seen.

LETTER IV.

SALT LAKE CITY, September 28th, 1869.

In the afternoon, on Sunday, religious services were held in the great Mormon Tabernacle by the subordinate members of the priesthood. Brigham does not often preach, and when he does, he prefers to preach in the Chapel which is much smaller than the tabernacle, and in which it is much easier for him to speak since he has worn his lungs “threadbare,” as he expresses it, by the public speaking he has done in the last twenty-five years.

Both the chapel and tabernacle are enclosed in the same lot or square, of ten acres, by a close substantial fence or wall, fifteen feet high, and entered through massive prison-like gates. The tabernacle is an immense structure, two hundred and fifty feet long by one hundred and fifty broad, and ninety-five feet high. It is oval in its outline, roof and sides, and looks like a huge 28 land turtle standing motionless in its tracks. The roof rests on the side walls, and has no inside pillars to support it. It is said to be the largest building ever erected in this country, without having interior columns. It will seat ten thousand people. At one end there is an elevated platform broad enough to accommodate the entire priesthood, which consists of Brigham as Divine Master, his three divine counselors, twelve apostles, and seventy elders. On this platform there stands a magnificent organ, brilliantly gilded in front, which is seventy-five feet high, and thirty-five wide. It was built by a Mormon. Its tones are as heavy as the muttering thunders, and yet as sweet as the music of the spheres. We were politely seated by the usher in a front seat, below, with the audience. There are no galleries. The house was well filled, probably not less than six or eight thousand people were in attendance. The priesthood occupied the platform, and, judging from their numbers, I should suppose they were all there except Brigham, who seldom attends service in the afternoon. The women occupied the central seats in the main body of the tabernacle, and the men encircled them round about like a hoop. I never before saw such a sea of upturned, credulous faces, as I beheld in this assemblage. There were twice as many women as men, and 29 “such beauties did they grow,” that you would have fancied yourself anywhere else than in a field of lilies. The audience was composed of almost every nationality known on the face of the globe. They all seemed absorbed in the services, which consisted in singing, reports from returned missionaries, and a rambling hit-

and-miss discourse from one of Brigham's divine counselors. Most of the priests appeared to be elderly men, with broken constitutions, who presided with a degree of rustic dignity that appeared somewhat ludicrous.

Brigham owes his success mainly to his missionaries. He sends them by hundreds to almost every part of the civilized world. The result is, that he obtains proselytes by the thousands, every year. Five parties of immigrants were reported at the tabernacle last Sabbath, as being on their way, or as having arrived this year; each party numbering from three hundred to seven hundred persons. In one of these parties seven different languages were spoken, indicating the various countries from which they came. All this was reported as the fruit of a single year's missionary labor.

The Mormon church is rich, and transports its proselytes from Europe to Utah, at its own expense, and is afterwards reimbursed from their earnings in this country. After they have paid 30 this expense in work which is allotted them, they are then, like all other Mormons, required to pay tithes to the church in cash or in kind, annually, during their natural lives. These tithes in kind are either sold or applied, as needed, to support poor immigrants, until they become able to provide for themselves. Nearly all the proselytes to the Mormon faith, for the last fifteen years, are made up of the ignorant and poverty-stricken classes of the old world, who, having nothing to lose, but every thing to gain, were induced to believe that in Salt Lake Valley they would find, not only an earthly paradise, but be enriched with all the blessings and wealth that this world can bestow. It is seldom that an American joins the Mormons. When Brigham dies, if not before, the organization will explode. Already there are factions in the church, which threaten its existence. In fact, Brigham seems aware that he has an elephant on his hands, and in order to prevent a crisis, will soon be obliged to announce a new Revelation.

Salt Lake City contains about twenty thousand inhabitants. It is laid out in one hundred and eighty square blocks of ten acres each, with intervening avenues of one hundred and thirty feet in width. The blocks are then sub-divided into lots, larger or smaller, to suit the wants of the citizens, 31 and are generally built up with wood or adobe dwellings, in which two or three families, sometimes more, belonging to one man, are often domiciled. With some exceptions, each family occupies

a distinct apartment, which is entered through a separate outside door. You can generally tell, therefore, how many families occupy the same house by the number of its front doors. The gardens are usually large, and filled with fruits, vegetables and flowers. Peaches, pears, and apples, of the largest size and finest quality I ever saw, abound here. Living streams of pure water, which descend from the neighboring snow-capped mountains, course along on either side of every avenue in the city, and are conducted in small rills through side-cuts into gardens and lawns to such extent as may be needed for the purpose of irrigation. The town is located on a plain, which extends from the base of the circular mountains on one side to the banks of the river Jordan on the other, a distance of two miles or more. This sacred river, as the Mormons esteem it, is ten or twelve rods wide, and fifteen miles long, connecting Lake Utah with Salt Lake. In the holy waters of this modern Jordan the Mormon converts are baptised, and as they say, washed of their sins. We visited the river, and picked up on its shore a black jasper, which we retain for exhibition to our friends, and as a 32 memento of Mormonism, the grandest humbug of the Nineteenth Century.

It is a singular fact that Salt Lake has no outlet, and though it receives into its basin several streams of fresh water, it grows none the less saline. It is, in many respects, like the Dead Sea. Neither fish, nor other living thing, can inhabit its waters. It is a fountain, if not a pillar of salt, which, though not consecrated to Lot's wife, will forever remind mankind of Brigham's wives.

Beside Salt-Lake valley, there are many other beautiful valleys in Utah; though much smaller in extent, they are as rich and fertile as the great valley. Nearly all of them, within a circuit of a hundred and fifty miles, are now occupied by Mormons and regularly visited by their Home Missionaries, who, in many instances, have wives and families of children in each valley with whom they stop when on the circuit. These families are expected to take care of themselves; but if unable to do so, they receive aid from the church revenues or tithes. The entire Mormon population, at this time, is said to be nearly two hundred thousand, and is rapidly increasing. The Mormons intend to control Utah as they ever have done, when it becomes a State. The penniless dupes they import are told that Utah is "a land flowing with milk and honey," and encircled with 33 mountains of gold and silver, and that its climate is a summer of perpetual fruits and flowers, with bread enough and to spare; nor are they informed, especially the women, until they arrive, that

polygamy is embraced in the articles of their new faith. It is then too late, destitute as they are, to retrace their steps. The priests select the handsomest girls for their wives, and do not seem to regard the act as amounting even to “a pious fraud.”

And yet, in all this there may be a wise Providence that looks to higher, nobler and holier results. Had it not been for the early, not to say unjust, persecution of the Mormons in the Eastern States, and their forced emigration to Utah in search of protection and a peaceful home, the grand Pacific Railway, in all probability, would not have been built for at least fifty years to come. The Mormons were thus made the pioneers who took the lead and opened the gateways into a new world, where they will finally be compelled to abandon their “peculiar institution,” and lose forever their identity in the flowing tide of western emigration.

Be this as it may, Salt Lake City will have a name, fame, and record, which time cannot obliterate. It is a beautiful city, and the natural scenery which surrounds it, is not only beautiful, but grand and sublime. The climate of the valley is 34 mild and summer-like throughout the year, and the soil as rich and productive as the garden of Eden. Nature has made the spot an earthly paradise. Brigham Young founded the city. It is and ever will be a Monument, which will commemorate his name. Yet not satisfied with this, he has already laid the foundation of a mighty temple which, when completed, will exceed in cost and grandeur the temple of Solomon. It is to be constructed of granite, with many spires and turrets, in accordance with divine instructions communicated, as he says, by an angel from Heaven, who appeared to him in a vision. We saw the foundation. It is built of immense blocks of hewn granite, procured from the mountains, eighteen miles distant, and cost a million of dollars, as we were informed by the architect. The whole cost of the temple, when finished, is estimated at three millions. Brigham is full of gigantic projects. He evidently means to survive death. He has done some good things. He educates the youth of his city, and prohibits the sale, within its limits, of all intoxicating liquors; yet tolerates a theatre, for the sake of its revenues, and often attends it himself. He maintains an efficient police force for the protection of the city and its citizens, and it is understood that he has secret agents, who execute the unrevealed decrees of the priesthood. As Head 35 of the Church, he owns nearly all the real estate of the city, and has several millions of gold deposited in the Bank of England, with which to meet emergencies. He has

built a railroad connecting the city with the Pacific road. It became a necessity, and will soon be put into active operation. He owns the road, and will control it. None of his wives, or proselytes, will be ticketed over it, who meditate escape from Mormondom. From appearances, I am satisfied that the women of Salt Lake are generally unhappy, and if they but had the opportunity, or had wings, would leave like a flock of pigeons. But this is impossible, so long as Brigham is the great lawgiver, and accepted as the second Christ by his misguided followers. As much as he may love women, he loves gold still more, and no man understands better than he the power of a blind religious faith, or the arts by which it may be made available, in promoting selfish and unhallowed purposes. And yet time may sanctify the character of Brigham, and perhaps deify him. At any rate, he has established a religion which will not die with him; though it may undergo material modifications. Mormonism is in fact but a revised edition of Mohammedanism. Five hundred years hence it may predominate the world over. Who knows?

LETTER V.

CARSON CITY, September 30th, 1869.

From Salt Lake City we returned by stage to the Pacific road, and proceeded on our way westward by rail. For many miles we ran along the margin of the great Salt Lake valley through a region whitened with a crust of soda or alkali, which appeared to the eye as if there had been a recent fall of snow. In many other parts of this country the soil is encrusted in a similar manner, and so deeply impregnated with this alkaline substance, as to destroy all vegetation.

On leaving the valley, we ascended Promontory Point, winding our way up by zigzag lines along the ledges of rock, which crop out and overlook the great Salt Lake basin. The view is as grand as it is extensive. We dined at the station on the summit. The dining hall is constructed with rough boards outside, and lined inside with white muslin. The dinner was excellent and 37 politely served. Here for the first time our dessert consisted of California fruits, grapes, pears, and apples, very large, fine and delicious. The charge was one dollar in gold. From this station westward gold is

the general circulating medium, but as a matter of accommodation to passengers, greenbacks are received at the stations in payment of traveling expenses.

After we left Promontory Point we frequently passed gangs of Chinamen at work, repairing and finishing up the road. They are a strange looking set of chaps, and look as much alike as two peas. They are much smaller in stature than Americans, have dark yellowish skins, smooth, round faces, black hair and black almond eyes; and as we passed them, they grinned and smiled in a manner that was truly comical. They are a quiet, submissive and respectful people in their demeanor. Some were dressed in Chinese costume, and others in half American style. They lodge in very low cloth tents, three or four feet high, and in some instances, instead of tents, they burrow in earth-mounds which resemble kennels. As laborers, they are faithful and efficient, working from sunrise till sunset, without regard to the ten hour system, and if they do not always mind their P's, they certainly do their *queues*. When at work they wear their queues, which are about 38 four feet long, coiled up, like a lady's switch, on the back part of the head.

We had now entered upon the vast plain, through which flows the Humboldt river, with here and there a bald-headed mountain and low range of equally bald hills. At this season of the year no green thing is seen, not even a tree, shrub, or blade of grass. It is a barren desert, silent as it is vast, producing nothing but sage brush. The soil is strongly impregnated with alkali. The dust which arises from the plain as the cars pass, is anything but agreeable. It parches the lips and skin, and irritates the throat and nasal linings to a degree that is often tormenting.

At most of the stations along this part of the route, we saw groups of Indians, men, women and children, standing idle and curious to see the train and its novelties, and begging for money, bread, meat, clothing, or anything else the passengers might please to give them. Dressed partly in Indian costume, and partly in old cast-off American garments, they created quite a sensation among the passengers, who enjoyed hugely their comical appearance. These Indians are remnant tribes, known as Shoshones, and Piutes, who are now regarded as quite harmless, but were once numerous and formidable; often at war with each other; and sometimes plundered and murdered 39 emigrants. But

now “the wing of their spirit is broken.” The onward march of civilization has overtaken them, and will soon extinguish the race.

The Humboldt river is comparatively small, larger in the direction of its source than at its termination, owing to the absorption of its waters in the sand as it flows. It is two hundred and fifty miles long, and empties into a lake of the same name. Along its course there are some grand and sublime scenes—especially the pass between the Palisades, a twin range of perpendicular rocks, fifteen hundred feet high, and apparently split asunder by volcanic action. In other places you will see granite rocks projecting from the faces of the round headed hills, resembling dragon's teeth, and reminding you that you are entering the dismal realms—if not the very jaws of destruction—yet this valley, in some seasons of the year, wears a cheerful aspect, as compared with the dry season, and affords excellent pasturage. The old emigrant trail may still be traced through its entire extent.

On reaching Reno, which is located on the eastern slope of the Sierras, we again stopped off, and took the stage to Carson City, the capital of Nevada, distant thirty-three miles. On the way we passed the famous “Steamboat Springs,” near the road-side. They derive their name from the fact that they puff like a steamboat under sail, and throw out on the air a trailing wreath of smoke or cloud, which induces you to look for the passing boat. But on examination, instead of a steamboat, you find several extensive fissures in the rocky surface of a treacherous spot, where the steam issues, and where it seems to be generated by a current of heated water, which you can hear bubble and hiss beneath your feet, and which is hot enough to boil potatoes in a few minutes. Whether the water is heated by a combination of chemical ingredients deep down in the earth, or by volcanic fires, is a question for science to settle; but at present the phenomenon remains a mystery. If you were to stand on the spot where I stood, I am sure you would think the infernal regions something more than a theological fiction.

Soon after passing the springs we entered Washoe, a small village in a deep valley, famous for its silver mines. It has several quartz mills at work, day and night, and turns out a large amount of bullion. It is located midway between Reno and Carson City. Like Washoe, Carson is also located in a deep valley, known as Eagle Valley, and is surrounded by picturesque mountains, clad with

piners. The city is situated on the Carson river, which winds its way gracefully along the valley, and contains a population of four or 41 five thousand. It is a much larger and richer town than Washoe, and is alike famous for its quartz mills and production of bullion, It now has a railroad connecting it with Virginia City, whence it derives most of its silver ore to supply its Mills. Being the seat of government for Nevada, nearly all the State officials reside here, the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, and Judges of the Supreme Court. The State officials are all gentlemen of intelligence and pleasing manners. In a word, they are not only men of brains and refined manners, but an honor to the State. The salary of the Supreme Judges is seven thousand dollars each, and this is paid in gold coin. One of them, Judge Johnson, was Governor of California, in the days of the famous Vigilance Committee. As yet, Nevada has no State House, and for the present, the Legislature and Supreme Court hold their sessions in rented halls, and the public offices are kept in side-rooms. The State Library is quite extensive for so young a State.

Nevada has exhibited her wisdom in making liberal provision for common schools, both by taxation and appropriation of public lands. She is about to erect for herself a magnificent State House. She has already built a Penitentiary, a very fine, substantial stone edifice, which is kept in excellent condition, and under a strict system of 42 discipline. It has, at this time, thirty-six inmates or convicts, three of whom are Chinamen; but no women. There is also a splendid Mint at Carson, which has just been erected by the Federal Government. The structure is of stone, spacious in its dimensions, and an ornament to the town. The quartz mills in the vicinity are doing a prosperous business. The rock mineral is pulverized by immense hammers or stamps, to a fine powder, and then run through vats in currents of water, the silver settling at the bottom from its weight. It is then collected by commingling quicksilver with the mass and separating it. I saw masses of silver bullion lying about loose, as large as I could lift, and vainly wished I could have as much as I could carry on my shoulder. If my wish had been granted, doubtless, I should have felt the need of more backbone than I possess. Nevada abounds, not only in the precious metals, but in copper, tin, lead, iron, coal, and quicksilver. In fact, her elements of wealth are inexhaustible. Every mountain is a mine, and every valley a granary. A thousand years will not disclose the half of her hidden treasures.

LETTER VI.

CARSON CITY, October 4th, 1869.

There are many points of interest in and about Carson. Not only the neighboring silver mines, but the graceful scenery of the winding valley, the mountains and their deep gorges interwoven with the lights and shadows cast by the reflected rays of the sun, the whispering pines, the mountain rills, the wild flowers that “waste their sweetness on the desert air,” all combine to lend “enchantment to the view.”

And what adds still greater interest to the fascinations of this charming little city, is the delightful society one may find here, especially among the “upper ten,” a class of refined and cultivated people, who are just aristocratic enough, and yet democratic enough, to make themselves exceedingly pleasant and agreeable in all their social relations, and popular generally among their fellow citizens. The ladies we met, while in the 44 city, fully convinced us that elegant and refined women may be found in the West as well as in the East. The ladies of Carson, at least many of them, are fine specimens of true womanhood, and are characterized by good taste and good sense, as well as by cordiality and elegance of manners. The kind and polite attentions we received, during our visit of a few days, will ever be remembered with gratitude; yet cannot be repaid with mere words of acknowledgement.

From Carson we made an excursion, in company with our friends, to Lake Tahoe, which is embosomed in the summits of the mountains, fifteen miles from the city. It is the most elevated lake on this continent, being six thousand feet above the level of the sea. It is reached by a turnpike, which winds its way up the mountains by angular lines, commanding at every turn magnificent views, and which cost the company that built it a hundred and forty thousand dollars. It is used, principally, for transporting pine lumber by teams from the mountain heights to the valley. Most of the teams employed consist of six or eight pairs of mules or oxen, and each team draws two, and sometimes three wagons, attached by chains, and carries from thirty to sixty tons to the load. In regions where there are no roads, they transport timber and fire-wood down the mountains 45

through flumes, constructed of plank, and into which streams of water are conducted, floating the wood and timber, stick by stick, for miles, and going at a rushing rate. The mountains are covered with dense forests of pine, and stand so huddled, and yet so independent of each other, as to resemble great earth-bubbles, inflated, I doubt not, by the action of subterranean fires, at some remote period in the earth's history. What is singular, the largest pines grow on the summits of the mountains, owing, perhaps, to the fact that they catch more sunlight than the smaller pines on the lower grades. Or it may be, the mountains were lifted up but halfway at the first convulsion, thus giving the summit pines a longer time to attain their growth.

Lake Tahoe is certainly a beautiful gem—the most beautiful that ever glittered in the crown of a mountain monarchy. Its waters are as clear and pure as crystal. It is said to be more than two thousand feet deep; and though it receives several streams, it has no outlet. You can see fish and pebbles glimmering in its depths, as in a mirror. It is quite a large lake, being thirty miles long and ten or twelve broad; nor was it made in vain. San Francisco is agitating the question of monopolizing its waters for the use of its citizens, by conducting it in iron pipes to the city, a distance 46 of a hundred and fifty miles, and at a cost estimated at twelve millions of dollars. Its borders are wild and romantic. It is surrounded by snow-capped mountains, which are reflected in the mirror of its waters. Ragged rocks, looking like armed giants, stand out here and there along its margin, as if to guard the spot from intrusion. Though located in a region of perpetual frost and snow, its waters never freeze; but why they should not, is a mystery. In summer it is a place of popular resort. The mountain air is pure, cool, and exhilarating. No invalid can breathe it without feeling its invigorating influence. Indeed its restorative influence is like the fabled elixir of life, it makes one, however old he may be, feel youthful, if not absolutely frolicsome. There is a small steamboat that plies on the lake, for the benefit and pleasure of visitors, and on both sides of the lake there are several first-class hotels, which furnish excellent accommodations for summer guests and pleasure parties. We stopped at the Glenbrook House, which commands a fine view of the lake and its scenery. The lake abounds in silver trout, so called because they are dotted with silver stars; a fresh-caught one, weighing six pounds, supplied us with an excellent dinner. The table was loaded

with all kinds of luxuries, including 47 the best of California fruits, and attended by a Chinese waiter.

Glenbrook gives name to the hotel, and runs dashing by its door, giggling and laughing like a mountain maid. On the opposite side of the glen rises Shakespeare Rock, two hundred feet high, looking like an immense statue, chiseled by human hands. It is in itself a marvel. Its apex resembles very distinctly the head of Shakespeare. The features of the face are like his in expression. The brow is crowned with a wreath of golden moss; and the eyes, nose, mouth, and chin, fully delineated. There he stands facing the lake, and gazing in mute rapture upon its placid waters. No artist could improve this portraiture of genius, which has been thus lithographed by the hand of Nature, and placed on exhibition in this lofty granite hall of her own Mountain Home.

Not far from the Shakespeare statue appears Cathedral Rock, which is so named from its resemblance to a Roman church. It looks so much like a magnificent church, that you imagine you can see the worshipers inside, through the gothic windows, engaged in their devotions. About three miles from Glenbrook there is a wonderful cave in a rock, which presents a bold, perpendicular front, overlooking the lake and rising to a height of four hundred and eighty feet. The cave opens 48 at its base and extends into the rock, like an arched passage-way, a hundred feet or more, and is high enough to admit of standing erect in it. We entered and advanced to its termination, but saw nothing except blackened, vitrified walls, and some specimens of jasper and agates. The cave was probably produced by volcanic action, and is well worth a visit.

There are many other interesting spots along the borders and in the vicinity of Lake Tahoe, which every excursionist should visit, who enjoys communion with Nature and admires her wonderful works. A few weeks spent here in summer, is worth more than a year squandered in Europe, or at a fashionable watering place in the Eastern States, so far as regards pleasure, or the attainment of health.

After enjoying the day here in the most delightful manner with our friends in sight-seeing, we returned to Carson in the evening by moonlight. We had a rapid and exciting ride down the

mountains. The commingled lights and shadows that fell on our way, and on the mountain sides, and in the deep gorges, reminded us of fairy land, and produced in our minds visions of all that is magical and beautiful, not to say fearful, as we were whirled along the edges of precipitous cliffs and abrupt descents, which terminated in 49 unknown depths. Yet we made a safe trip of it, and reached the city at a seasonable hour in the evening, highly gratified with the experiences of the day.

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LETTER VII.

SACRAMENTO, October 6th, 1869.

Yesterday we took leave of our friends and the many pleasant acquaintances we had made at Carson City, and returned by stage to Reno, in time to take the night train going west. We had an exciting ride. The stage team consisted of six horses, fat, sleek and fast. The famous Hank Monk held the ribbons—the same chap who drove Horace Greeley over the mountain road to Placerville, a few years ago, in time to lecture. On entering the coach, I alluded to the fact, and requested a specimen of his skill; but remarked that I was a good democrat and didn't think I deserved, on the score of political sins, so hard a *jolting* as he gave Greeley. But we had no sooner started than the speed began to increase, until the jolts became so intolerable that I implored moderation. “Hank” replied to me as he did to Horace, “Keep your seat, sir.” This I tried to do, but the 51 more I tried the more I couldn't, and the result was, we reached Reno, a distance of thirty-three miles, an hour and a half ahead of time. The moment “Hank” entered the hotel, I congratulated him, extolled the speed of his horses and his horsemanship, and gave the barkeeper an intimation that put Hank in good spirits, or rather good spirits into Hank, a compliment which he acknowledged with a very low, conciliatory bow; and thereupon we parted, exchanging a profusion of kind wishes for each other's success in the journey of life.

Reno is an important railroad station, extemporized of canvas and rough boards, contains six or seven hundred inhabitants, and takes its name from Gen. Reno, who was killed in battle at

South Mountain. It is built without much regard to order; yet is rapidly advancing in wealth and population, and promises to become the leading city of the mountains. It is located within a rich and extensive mining district, and only twenty miles from Virginia City. Almost every mushroom town, though not much but a railroad station, is dignified with the name of a city in this region of the country. Truckee is the great lumber mart of the mountains, and the largest city on the Central. It has a population of nearly five thousand. Not far from here you pass 52 Donner Lake. It is a beautiful, rock-rimmed basin of water, pure as liquid silver; yet there is connected with it a very sad story of human suffering.

In 1846, late in the fall, a party of emigrants, who had crossed the plains, arrived at this lake and camped for the night on its borders. They brought with them horses, wagons, and a few head of horned cattle, but their provisions were nearly exhausted. The party consisted of sixteen persons, among whom were Mr. Donner, his wife and four children. During the night there came on a violent snow storm, which continued for three days, and completely blockaded every avenue of escape. Their situation became alarming, and the prospect of relief, at so late a period in the season, seemed entirely hopeless; and yet, if they attempted to remain for the winter, they knew they must perish of cold and hunger.

In view of this fearful state of things, the strong men of the party resolved to make an effort to reach the valley on the coast, and for this purpose saddled the horses, and invited the entire party to join them. But Mr. Donner, being unwell, declined. His wife concluded to remain with him, but permitted her children to go. After the party had mounted their horses, and were about to start, one of them, a stout Dutchman, dismounted and declared his intention to remain 53 with Donner and his wife. The party then started on their perilous journey, and, after severe struggles and much suffering, reached the valley in safety. Soon after their departure, the cattle and horses left at the camp, escaped, and were lost in the mountains. The remaining scanty supply of provisions in camp were soon exhausted. Starvation came with all its horrors. It is supposed that Donner and the Dutchman cast lots to determine which of the two should lose his life to become food for the others. The lot fell on the Dutchman; but in the conflict, he killed Donner, and when the food thus furnished was consumed, he killed Mrs. Donner. This is probably the truth; for in the spring, when

the party in the valley returned to the mountains, with a view to relieve the sufferers, they found the Dutchman in the cabin, greedily gnawing the roasted flesh from a human arm, which had been severed from the body. On searching, they found the mutilated remains of Mrs. Donner, buried in the snow near the cabin. The indications were that she had been murdered. The cannibal was seized, taken to the valley and imprisoned, but refused to give any account of the matter. A few words written on a slip of paper, by Mrs. Donner, and found in the cabin, revealed the manner in which her husband had been killed. In addition to this, 54 a large sum of money, known to have belonged to Mr. Donner, was found secreted on the Dutchman's person. This was taken from him and awarded to the Donner orphans; but the cannibal was finally acquitted of the crimes charged against him, for want of sufficient legal testimony. He still lives, it is said, and wears the brand of a murderer—a cannibal—burning on his brow. Such is the terrible tragedy, which gave the name of Donner to that beautiful mountain lake.

The highest point on the route over the Sierras, is Summit Station, seven thousand and forty-two feet above the level of the sea. In crossing, we ran through some dozen tunnels, the longest of which is seventeen hundred feet. Some of the bridges that span the gorges, are six to seven stories high, all built of trussel work. They creak and tremble under the weight of the cars, and if you look down into the chasms below, you may expect your head to swim with a dizzy sensation. The immense chasm, called Cape Horn, is, perhaps, the most terrific. Not only its fearful depth, but its sweep of breadth and extent, and its awful overhanging crags of rocks, all combine to make it one of the grandest and most entrancing views of natural scenery anywhere to be found. In this part of the route there are sixty miles of snowsheds, erected to protect the road from snow-slides 55 that descend from the higher parts of the mountains, and snow drifts that would otherwise accumulate on the track. The sheds are constructed of heavy timber, secured by iron bolts, and roofed with plank, so as to correspond with the slope of the mountain-sides. The side of the sheds over-looking the descent, is boarded up leaving here and there a window space, covered with a board-blind, hung on hinges, which is lifted and left open in the milder portions of the year, so as to allow passengers to catch a view of the passing scenery. The train, like a huge anaconda, seems to leap the chasms,

and wind itself around the mountain sides, gliding with a terrific hiss through the dark snow-sheds and dismal tunnels, as if in pursuit of prey, or frightened by some implacable enemy.

In the vicinity of Gold Run, a small town in the mountains, we saw abundant evidences of surface mining for gold. The soil for miles has been dug over and upturned by the miners. On both sides of the road there are long lines of flumes, constructed of plank or boards, conducting currents of water to suit the several localities of the diggings. Cleats or strips of board are nailed across the bottom plank of the flume, to arrest the particles of gold as they float, which are heavier than the drifting soil, and therefore sink and lodge against the cleats or stops. Large amounts of gold-dust have been obtained in this simple way. The same method is adopted in hundreds of other localities, but has become much less remunerative than formerly, owing to the exhaustion of the surface mines, so far as they have yet been discovered. The quartz rock mines, where mills are employed, are now regarded as much the most reliable, as well as the most productive. Near this is Colfax, a very pretty town, which exhibits much good taste in the style of its buildings, especially its public buildings. It takes its name from Schuyler Colfax, now Vice-President of the United States, and has about twelve hundred inhabitants.

The descent down the western slope of the Sierras is comparatively steep and rapid, and soon accomplished. The "Junction" at the foot is the last eating station going west. It is so called because the Central connects here with the Sacramento and Oregon Railroad. It is here we first entered the great coast valley of California. From here the country is generally level in the direction of the Pacific, and the plains begin to widen as you proceed. They are rich in point of soil, and here and there you will see herds of cattle and horses roaming at will. There are no fences. In the winter and spring months, California, they say, may justly be called "The Flowery Kingdom,"⁵⁷ nor do I pretend to doubt it; but, at this particular season of the year, it looks like a vast desert. At least, it so appeared to me, as I saw it in this, my first vision of the Sacramento valley. There is nothing green to be seen. Everything is dry as a husk, far and near, except gardens and other spots irrigated by artificial means.

The City of Sacramento, where we arrived at noon, is situated on the east side of the river, bearing the same name. It is quite a large city, famous for its enterprise and great wealth. The leading men here are not men of straw, but men of pluck and of enlarged views. Nothing, however formidable, seems too much for them to undertake. A few years ago the city was but a hamlet, a mere outpost on the borders of the mining district; but now, though nearly destroyed several times by fire and flood, it has become a rich and flourishing city, containing some thirty thousand inhabitants. It is the capital of California, and within a hundred and twenty-six miles of San Francisco. Its leading hotels and public edifices are built on a large scale and in magnificent style. It is the grand centre of railroads and machine shops, and manufacturing establishments, of almost every kind. The shops belonging to the Pacific Central cover twenty acres of ground. These shops are supplied with water by artesian 58 wells. The car-shop alone employs three hundred and seventy men. In connection with the shops there is a hospital, built by the railroad company, for the care of sick and disabled workmen. Of all the American cities I have yet seen, I think Sacramento not only the most enterprising, but possessed of the most solid wealth, considering its population.

LETTER VIII.

SAN FRANCISCO, October 10th, 1869.

On the way from Sacramento to this city, we saw and learned some things that interested us exceedingly, and perhaps some account of them might interest you. I allude to the vast, but shorn wheat fields, and the method of cultivating wheat. The farms, or ranches, as they call them, through which we passed, are very extensive, consisting, in some instances, of many thousand acres. At this season the entire extent of the country, along the route from Sacramento to this city, looks like a continuous stubble-field, and is dry and dusty. The Sacramento valley is, in fact, the heart of the wheat region. The lands are rich and generally level; but in some parts they become rolling and even hilly. The quality of the wheat grown here excels that of any other part of the world. The flour it makes is the whitest, and the bread the sweetest and most delicate imaginable. The 60 grain is so hard that it requires a special process to mill it. Some farmers sow a breadth of one thousand to six thousand acres. They plow with a machine, sow with a machine, reap with a machine, thrash

and winnow with a machine. The plow, called a “gang-plow” runs on wheels, and holds itself. It has an elevated seat for the teamster, who sits and rides like a gentleman in a sulky. The reaping machine, called a “header,” runs ahead of the team that propels it, and clips off the wheat heads with a vibrating knife, letting them fall on a revolving canvas, which deposits them in an attendant wagon. When full, the wagon delivers its contents to a thrashing-machine, which thrashes and winnows the grain, depositing it in heaps, where it remains in the open air, sometimes for weeks, until it can be sacked and delivered at a railroad station for transportation. In a climate so dry as this is, they have no fears of rain for six or seven months in the year, and therefore build but few barns. At different stations, along the Sacramento valley, we saw millions of bushels of wheat in sacks, lying along the track, corded up like fire-wood, and extending for miles in a line with the wayside. Its appearance reminded me of the great Chinese wall. A country that fortifies itself with sacked wheat, can never be sacked, or subjugated. The wheat crop 61 of this year is estimated at twenty millions of bushels.

Here let me stop and take breath for a few minutes. It is refreshing to do so, in the midst of a series of constant surprises. Coming from the East overland to California, is literally stepping into a new world. Everything is new—a chaos of wonders. Before I forget it, allow me to give you, in a few words, my general impressions of the mountain plains and the California valley, or coast, so far as I have already seen them.

In the mountain ranges, with a few exceptions, the face of the country is destitute of timber of every kind; looks like a desert, and is relieved by no green thing, except sage brush. This plant abounds, and in its odor and appearance resembles our garden sage, but grows much larger and stronger, and is as scraggy as the witch of Endor's hair. It has its uses, however, and is gathered, dried and consumed, as fuel, by the pioneers and aborigines. It has a pungent taste and the flavor of sage, and doubtless may possess valuable medicinal qualities.

So in the valleys and plains along the coast range, there is little or no timber to be found. The only trees to be seen in traveling by rail, are the low branching live oaks, an evergreen which looks like an aged apple tree in its shape and size. 62 These oaks stand scattered over the face of the country

in places, or rather in groups, in such a way as to induce you to think them apple orchards. The trunks of the trees are short and gnarled, the tops low and broad; but the timber is of no use, except for fire-wood. They have no fences in this country, and need no fire-wood, except for cooking purposes, so mild is the climate.

We arrived in San Francisco on the 6th inst., early in the evening, crossing the Bay in a steamer. The moment we stepped on the wharf, we were surrounded by an army of noisy and uproarious backmen, who contended with each other manfully for the prizes, or rather for the victims. Every hotel in the city was lauded as the best, and denounced as the worst in town. We knew where we wished to go, and soon escaped from the battlefield in a private hack to a friend's house.

The next day we took a brief survey of our whereabouts, and found ourselves in the heart of a splendid city, only twenty years old, yet looking mature, and destined to become the great central city of the commercial world. It is here that Europe, Asia and America will meet, shake hands, and be good friends. Here they will concentrate their wealth, exchange commodities, gamble in stocks, and test the comparative sharpness of their wits.

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In the course of a few days, after our arrival, we began to feel quite at home in the city. The citizens are candid, frank and polite to strangers, and generous to a fault. They are proud of their city, and seem to think there is no other place in the wide world so delightful as California. In this opinion I concur so far as my brief experience extends. The general aspect of the city is peculiar. It looks as if it was constructed of sand-hills and windmills, and in truth it really is. The picture, however, has some other features of a more attractive character. It is a difficult city to describe. In fact, there is very little use in attempting to describe it. If I should attempt, it would outgrow my description before I could finish it.

The city is located on the tip end of a tongue of land, or peninsula, lying between the Bay and the Sea. This peninsula is about forty miles long and ten to twelve broad. The surface is broken into hills and vales, and presents to the eye a scene of great natural beauty, wild and romantic as fairy

land. From the north end of the peninsula the city has already extended itself southerly some six miles, and is rapidly advancing. It contains at this time, it is said, one hundred and seventy-five thousand inhabitants. This is a wonderful growth for a city but twenty years old, especially when we consider the fact that it has been twice almost entirely destroyed by fire. The time will soon come when the city will extend over and densely occupy the whole peninsula. The Bay is amply sufficient in breadth and depth to accommodate the navies of the civilized world, and furnishes a line of dockage that might be improved and extended to the entire distance of forty miles. If I were a land speculator, I would invest in the peninsula, in preference to investing in the richest gold mine as yet known in California. One can hardly miss it, who purchases land anywhere within ten or twenty miles of the city. Nature evidently intended there should be a great city here—the central mart of the commercial world—and has therefore done her part in laying the foundations on a magnificent scale. The San Franciscans, though sagacious and quick in their perceptions, do not yet seem to comprehend the great, the splendid future that lies before them. It may be truthfully said of the Pacific coast, generally, that for climate and productiveness of soil, it excels the world. For beauty of natural scenery and sunny skies, Italy does not compare with it. The air here is so pure and exhilarating, that it makes one feel, who breathes it, as if he were drinking champagne all the time. It not only invigorates the invalid, but rejuvenates old 65 age, and prolongs life to an indefinite period, so long, indeed, that persons wishing to die at three score and ten, can't. So say the Californians. It is enough, perhaps, to say that it is a wonderful country—a land of fruits and flowers, enriched with mountains of gold. It is the gold that “lends enchantment to the view.” Yet this modern paradise has its annoyances. In San Francisco, dense fogs envelop the city till ten o'clock in the morning, and strong winds prevail the rest of the day, drifting the sand into mounds, and into your eyes so as to blind you. Turning the corners of the streets in the wind, reminds you of a drifting snow-storm, in mid-winter, in a New England city. Still, by way of compensation for all this, you have here a cloudless sky for nine months in the year; a climate that is uniformly mild; and a vernal season that flings over the hills and the valleys a mantle of wild flowers, perfuming every breath of air you breathe. And yet, in California, it is gold that makes the man; the want of it, an outcast, or an outlaw. It is said there are at least seven thousand able-bodied men in San Francisco, who cannot find employment, and probably more than twice that number roving about the State,

awaiting chances, who are alike destitute of friends and of money; and hence, many of this class, with starvation staring them in the face, resort to stealing, or highway robbery, in order to live. It is, after all, a poor country for a poor man; but a good country for a man who has capital, nerve, and perseverance.

LETTER IX.

SAN FRANCISCO, October 20th, 1869.

The more I see of this city the more I am surprised with its peculiarities, nationalities, and novelties. It is a modern Rome, built on not only seven, but seventy times seven hills. Some of these hills are large, and composed of granite; but the most of them are conical sand-hills, which have been drifted into strange and novel shapes by the prevailing winds, and which are constantly increasing or diminishing, at the will of the freakish and invisible spirits that mould them. In many parts of the city nearly every lot is, or was, prior to the grade, encumbered with a sand-hill. The grading often costs more than the lot. The large sand-hills are removed by steam shovels, and cars that run on temporary railways, constructed for the purpose. In this way, deep valleys are filled up by the deposit, and new lots made. In fact, it has cost about as much to grade the city as to build it. Lots seem to go and come with the wind.

The windmills give to the general appearance of the city a feature that is as singular as it is repulsive to architectural taste. They are erected for the purpose of pumping water from wells to irrigate the lawns and gardens, and consist of a frame tower twenty or thirty feet high, surmounted with a circular tank, and a fan-wheel which revolves in the wind, working a force-pump, that supplies water to the tank, whence it is conducted in pipes, or open flumes, to every part of the lawn or garden. By this means the grounds occupied for residences are kept green, and the gardens made productive, the year round. Those citizens who neglect to irrigate, reside in sandy deserts, just the size of their respective lots, during the dry season, which continues for seven or eight months of the year. The poorer classes cannot afford the luxury of irrigation, and consequently the town plat for two thirds of the year looks like a chequer board, or patch bed-quilt.

The commercial part of the city is located along the Bay, and built up in magnificent style, in blocks of stone, brick, and iron, three and four stories high, and equal to the best business streets in the eastern cities. Most of the buildings are anchored or braced with iron bolts, so as to secure them against the action of earthquakes. 69 The ground in this part of the town is level, being made-land by grading the sand-hills into the bay. By this process some five hundred acres have been reclaimed from the sea, and are now quite densely occupied. The wholesale and retail stores are not only imposing in the fronts they present, but largely stocked with every variety of goods and products gathered from every clime. The churches and other public buildings, are generally characterized by a corresponding grandeur and magnificence. The principal hotels are spacious and fitted up in elegant style, and conducted on a scale of liberality, not to say extravagance, which would astonish you.

There is no city on the face of the globe, I think, in which the leading business men exhibit so much activity and intensity of purpose, so much rushing ahead in the streets, as in San Francisco. The business streets, from morning till night, are crowded with passing drays, and men stepping on each other's heels, and jostling elbows at every angle, as if life were at stake. And more especially is this true on steamer days, so called from the sailing of the Panama steamers every two weeks, when all merchants are expected to settle balances with each other. In doing this an unusual bustle is created in the streets and in the banks; hundreds of men are seen bearing hither and thither 70 sacks of gold coin on their shoulders, containing in some instances as much as they can conveniently lift. At almost every shop-door you will hear, in passing, the "musical ring" of twenty dollar pieces, as they are counted out in adjustment of dues and demands. On one of these steamer days I stepped into the Bank of California, where I saw more gold received and paid out, and standing in cord-piles, than I ever expect to see again. It took an army of clerks to count the money. It was a rich sight worth going across the continent to behold, especially in these days when we have nothing in the East but filthy scrip and greenbacks. This bank has a capital of five millions, and owns gold and silver mines, Government stocks and real estate, valued at five times its original capital. In a word, it controls the financial interests of the Pacific coast.

The various nationalities concentrated in San Francisco, make it an epitome of the civilized world. In fact, every civilized nation is represented here. The Irish predominate and dominate. The Chinese are curiosities. They dress alike, and look alike, and are really a very shrewed people. Not much less than thirty thousand reside in the city. Some of them are merchants on a large scale, worth from thousands to millions of dollars, and are truly very intelligent and accomplished men. The 71 Chinese population occupy, almost exclusively, several of the business streets, and follow all sorts of trades and employments from cooks to bankers. They all read and write their own language with apparent facility. They have in their tongue an extensive literature, consisting of novels, history and philosophy. They have a religion founded on the teachings of Confucius, and worship in temples.

We stepped into one of their temples, escorted by a Chinaman, and took a view of its interior and the manner of the worshipers. The temple we visited is built of brick, stands retired from the street and in the rear of other buildings, and is reached by a narrow passage between high brick walls. In the second story there is a spacious hall, dusty and dismal as a prison, which is but faintly lighted by a single taper standing on a sort of pulpit or desk, near the end of the hall. Behind this desk, on a shelf-like projection somewhat elevated, sits Joss—the god—before whom the worshipers reverently bow in a kneeling posture, hiding their faces in their hands as in prayer, and whispering a few words, then rise and retire without observing any special order or time, either in going or coming. The hall is decorated with fantastical pictures of man, beast and plant, and other things unlike any thing in nature. The graven image, Joss, sitting on his elevated seat behind the desk, resembles a 72 little old man; is painted black, and striped with red and yellow, and in outline presents a grotesque appearance. He has a sullen and unrelenting expression of face, and with a curled lip seems to grin and gnash his teeth, as if he intended to devour his delinquent devotees. He is regarded, not as the Good Spirit, but as the Evil Spirit, who inflicts on the Celestials all the ills that befall them in this life. In the hope of averting these ills, they propitiate his forbearance by worship and offerings. On his right hand stands a wooden horse saddled and bridled ready for him to ride; on his left stands a burning taper to light his way. He is supposed to take a ride into the wide world in the night time. In addition to these they furnish him, daily, with nice dishes of cooked food, such as roast pig, baked fowl, and other delicacies, which he is presumed to relish.

This supply of food always disappears in the night, and the Celestials believe Joss consumes it. Near the god there is a narrow side-door in the wall which opens into the priest's apartment, and doubtless the crafty priest manages to live on "the fat of the land."

In regard to the Good Spirit, the Celestials believe that all the blessings they enjoy in this life are derived from him, and that he is too good and too kindly disposed in his nature to do them harm. They say he dwells in Heaven, is invisible, and 73 undefinable, and cannot, therefore, be represented by an image, or elevated or gratified by human worship, but receives the souls of all good Chinamen at death, who live in accordance with the divine instructions of Confucius, and whose dust is commingled, after death, with the sacred soil of the Celestial Empire. Hence every Chinaman desires to be buried in his native land, and, in case he dies in a foreign country, makes provision for the return of his remains, if possible. In San Francisco, there are several organized companies among the Chinese, who receive deposits and apply the money in payment of expenses for re-shipping to China the remains of their countrymen, who die in California. This practice grows out of their religious belief. They are, indeed, a peculiar people. There is much in their character, however, which should command the respect of christendom. They are an honest, industrious, peace-loving people, who have achieved a refined civilization; a civilization which is older, nobler and purer than that of Rome, Greece or Egypt. The "Golden Rule," the very basis of Christianity, was derived from China, and taught in China more than four thousand years before the commencement of the Christian era. Their government is based on moral character and educational acquirement. They revere their rulers, honor age, and commune with the spirits of their 74 dead. They regard each other as a common brotherhood. They not only excel in the arts, but have inventive genius of a high order. They invented gunpowder and discovered the art of printing long before either was known in Europe. They are imitators by instinct, and can do any thing they see done. Their language is unlike any other known language, ancient or modern. It consists of about three hundred and thirty monosyllables, each of which has four distinct sounds, and each sound conveys a different thought or idea, and is represented in writing by a separate character. The number of characters employed is at least forty thousand. It is, therefore, a difficult language to acquire.

It is true the Chinese love money, and will do any thing, or suffer any hardship, to get it; yet they are trustworthy and skilful in whatever they engage, and strive to give their employers satisfaction. In this they seldom fail. They are generally liked, except by the Irish, who hate and abuse them because they cheapen labor and are preferred. They are very considerate of the prejudices of white men and never intrude, not even to take seats inside street cars, but pay and ride on the outside platform. They are habitually polite, civil and respectful, in whatever position they are placed, whether as servants in families, or as laborers in 75 the work-shop, in the factory or field. Scattered along the Pacific slope, there are probably not less than seventy or eighty thousand Chinese, with here and there a few Japanese. Of late the Japanese come in colonies, and propose growing silk and tea in this country. They regard the soil and climate of California as well adapted to these products, and doubtless the experiment will prove successful.

In fact, these Asiatics are becoming an important element in American civilization, and not only deserve to be encouraged, but should enjoy equal rights with American citizens. We have a vast unoccupied territory that needs developement; nothing but cheap labor can do it, the more the better. China might spare a hundred millions of her dense population and hardly miss them. This country could receive that number by degrees, and in the course of a half century become the mart and master of the world, if she is not already.

The uniform mild climate of the Pacific coast is really an Asiatic climate, happily adapted to the occupation and developement of the Mongolian race. There is something in the effect of climate that enstamps its impress on the race to which it is adapted. Hence the Mexicans, the Indians, the Pacific islanders, the Japanese, the Chinese, and Hindostanese belong to an Asiatic climate, and are constituted essentially alike in 76 their color, statue, and other leading characteristics. It is evident from the history of races that the Anglo-Saxon cannot flourish in a warm, equable climate. His nature requires the extremes of heat and cold, as marked by the four seasons in higher latitudes. In a uniform mild climate he will gradually deteriorate, and finally become extinct. People the Pacific coast with Saxons, and allow no accessions or intermixture for a century or two, and I doubt not the law of climate would greatly modify their native characteristics, if it did not extinguish them.

LETTER X.

SAN FRANCISCO, October 30th, 1869.

Gold not only concentrates but begets talent. This is fully illustrated in the history of San Francisco. Here you will find, concentrated, more men who excel in every art and science, than in any other city in the world containing the same population. This is true, whether you refer to genius and excellence, as exhibited in the pulpit, at the bar, on the bench, at the counter, or in the workshop. The public libraries are numerous, and some of them extensive. The Mercantile library contains over thirty thousand volumes. The public schools are conducted with great efficiency and sustained by a liberal taxation. The churches, of which there are some sixty or more, are also liberally sustained and generally well attended. The church in which the late Starr King preached, is among the most attractive for its size, finish and arrangements. The society built it in 78 accordance with his taste and plan. He was a very popular, eloquent and genial gentleman, as well as an ardent patriot and preacher. He wielded an unbounded influence not only in the city, but throughout the state. The church is his monument. He sleeps in its lawn and beneath its shadow.

The Jewish synagogue, on Sutter street, is a very large and imposing edifice, richly finished inside and out, and in point of wealth and grandeur might be taken for Solomon's temple. Its circular towers overlook the city, and like the shot tower, are among the first objects that attract the stranger's eye. The "old Mission Church," on Mission street, built of adobe by the Jesuits nearly one hundred years ago, is an interesting relic of olden time, and well worth a visit. The Catholics are supposed to be the most numerous religious sect in San Francisco, the Protestants next, and then the Jews. A large number of the merchants, it is said, are Jews; the balance French, Spaniards, Italians, Germans, Scotch, English, Irish, Chinese and Americans. In the latter class are embraced nearly all the leading merchants of the city. They are the men of backbone and enterprise, who build the city and pay the burthen of its taxation.

The trade and commerce of San Francisco have become comparatively immense. In less than 79 twenty years the merchandise export trade has increased from one million and a half to twenty-two

millions of dollars per annum. The gold exports average for the last twenty-one years nearly fifty millions per annum. Though the gold mines are less productive than formerly, the silver mines have largely increased their productions, and promise a still more liberal yield for the future.

The climate here is always temperate and delightful, not excepting the rainy season, which is made up, like our April, of sunshine and showers. The thermometer rarely varies more than seven degrees. But twice in the last twenty years have snow-flakes whitened the ground, or been known to fall in San Francisco. For at least three-fourths of the year you may here enjoy a continuous sunshine, without the interruption of a cloud. Woolen clothing is worn the year round by the citizens. The nights are always cool, and you sleep well. The markets are stocked throughout the year with the best of beef, mutton, wild game, fish and fowl, including every variety of fruits and garden vegetables. The gardens furnish strawberries, green corn, green peas, new potatoes, and other luxuries of this character in abundance, every month in the year. The fruits and vegetables are as excellent in quality as they are remarkable for size. Onions grow as large as tea-plates; beets sometimes weigh 80 from fifty to seventy-five pounds apiece; sweet potatoes five to six pounds; pears two pounds; apples one pound; peaches half a pound; a stem of grapes from five to twelve pounds. Breadstuffs are exceedingly cheap. Fuel is not much used except for cooking.

A man may live here for fifty cents a day, or at the rate of five dollars a day, and so far as food is concerned about equally well at either price. Wages are high; laborers who are skilful are scarce, while speculators are quite too numerous. And yet the city is full of idlers who live, nobody knows how. You see them at every corner in the business streets, standing in groups earnestly discussing or cursing their luck and prospects. The hotels overflow with strangers coming and going, all on the rush. On some of the streets, nearly every other door opens into a drinking saloon, gambling den, or something worse. The gamblers dress richly and overload themselves with ostentatious jewelry. There is no place so safe that thieves do not “break through and steal.” And yet there is as much good society to be found in San Francisco as in any other city of the same population. They are a social, genial, generous people, especially the better classes. They appreciate talent. A high order of talent commands any price it pleases to ask, in the pulpit, at the concert, or in the 81 lecture-

hall. Their editors and magazinists are men of eminent abilities. The “Overland Monthly,” for originality, freshness, and vigor of thought, excels its Eastern contemporaries.

The city has natural advantages which cannot be taken away from her. She has no rival, and need fear none. She sits majestic on her throne of hills, and bathes her feet in the sea. Telegraph-hill is her flag-staff. It looks in the distance like a church spire, and is built with dwellings to its apex. From its highest point floats the American flag, as a signal to ships at sea, seeking to enter the Golden Gate. The islands in the bay are small, but exceedingly picturesque, and look like emeralds bestudding the bosom of the ocean. The Government occupies several of them for military purposes. Nature opened the golden gate by cleaving asunder a mountain range, and left it open. Any ship can pass through it that pleases, except a public enemy. The adjoining fort, built as it were on one of the gate-posts—a bluff—commands the entrance. If an enemy should attempt to pass, one broadside from the guns of the fort would annihilate him.

Montgomery street is the Broadway of San Francisco. It is thronged from morning till night with a richly dressed people, many men, and some fair women. In other words, it is the fashionable 82 shop row of the city, elegantly built and stocked. Here you will find every thing heart can wish, and the thing you will most wish will be gold in your purse. They keep splendid goods, and ask extravagant prices. Rents throughout the city are excessive. In the business part of the city some stores pay a rent of fifteen hundred dollars a month. Houses that are merely ordinary, rent from two to three thousand dollars a year, and better class houses for five thousand. Taxes are still more excessive than rents. How people contrive to live here is to me a mystery. Yet everybody dresses well and appears to live well. There is seldom a professional beggar to be seen.

In the evening when the street lamps are lighted, if you climb flag-staff hill and take a survey of the brilliant scene, you will think you have caught a view of the great celestial city, all ablaze with glory, and undulating in billows of light over a vast range of hills and valleys, where the infinite armies of the blest, clad in glittering raiment, are marching on from height to height, until lost in the unbounded domain of the burning stars.

There are several public gardens within the city which are filled with all that is rich and rare in art and nature, especially Woodward's. In the suburbs, also, there are many pleasant places of public resort. The Cliff House is one of the most popular, situated about ten miles from the city, on a rocky point of land extending into the ocean. Here we saw hundreds of seals sleeping on the rocks or frolicking or diving in the sea. Some of them are very large, weighing from three to five hundred pounds, and when gathered on the rocks sometimes quarrel and howl like a pack of hounds in full chase. They have heads much like dogs, short legs, and are usually of a brown color. The rocks look like old ruined castles, and stand out a little way from shore in the sea, yet in plain sight from the Cliff House. These rocks, at all times of day, are covered with seals which are regarded by visitors as objects of great curiosity and interest. Here you will see pleasure parties, the elite of the city, arriving and departing at all hours in the day. The house keeps every kind of refreshments the "inner man" can desire, and furnishes a band of musicians in addition. The gaities and festivities of this delightful resort excel in interest anything of the kind we have ever before seen. Here you can dance or sing, eat, drink and be merry; ogle the seals, or ogle the girls, as you please. Whatever else you may do, you are not allowed to disturb the seals. They are protected by law, and seem to enjoy themselves hugely, and to care for nobody.

In going to the Cliff House, we took the 84 turnpike, which is as fine a road as there is in the world, and returned by the ocean beach, along the water's edge, on the trackless sand, which was as hard as a pavement. On our right was the vast ocean, rolling landward its mountain billows, which broke on the sand beneath our carriage wheels; and on our left lay a sandy plain, covered with little sand-hills, of conical shape, which had been moulded by the ocean winds, and over which had grown a wild myrtle, giving them the appearance of hay-cocks in a farmer's meadow. As the billows broke on shore, the spray drifted over us, and refreshed the myrtle with a dewy baptism, as if flung from the godly fingers of old Neptune himself. The scene was one of great beauty and grandeur, connected as it was with a sunset, which threw a brilliant pathway on the ocean, glowing as if paved with fire, and which seemed to span the restless and untrodden deep, and lead upward from earth to Heaven, until lost in the mysteries of the infinite.

LETTER XI.

SAN FRANCISCO, November 5th, 1869.

In this famous city and in its surroundings, there are so many places of interest to a stranger that I find it impossible to visit them all. A few days ago we took a drive on the San Bruno turnpike, a delightful road that winds along the margin of the bay, and around the spurs of Mount Bruno, that terminate upon it. On the one hand lay the placid waters of the bay; on the other, mountain spurs and intervening valleys of rare beauty. It is one of Nature's theatres, in which she appears clad in all her native charms.

Along the line of the bay, and within a few rods of us, thousands of waterfowl, ducks and geese, were swimming, or flying about in groups, quite fearless of man and thoughtless of danger. On the land-side, the natural scenery was ever varying, as we rounded the sharp points and projections of the mountain spurs. Here was an 86 alcove, and there a cradled valley, of surpassing beauty. Some of these valleys are occupied by settlers. It was cheering to see the neat farm-house, the white cottage on the hillside, the garden, the meadow, and the cultivated fields. It is here that you may find not only the "happy valley," but a great many of them. The views in every direction, from the hills and from the bay, are grand, combining the romantic with the beautiful.

In the distance, on the opposite side of the bay, Mount Diablo lifts his giant form, as if taking a quiet survey of this lovely realm. He feels interested, I doubt not, in the "march of civilization," and is waiting patiently for opportunities. They say, go where you will, the evil one is ever present. Diablo is a prominent landmark, being the meridian point in the survey of the State; a lofty mountain, standing alone in the midst of the surrounding plains. There is an extensive coal mine connected with it, that furnishes several of the neighboring towns with fuel. In the course of our ride we crossed the San Jose Railroad, and stopped to rest our horses at a farm-house, belonging to our friend, one of the party, who resides in the city. We returned by the Mission Bay route, led by the stars. It was a delightful excursion, and one which we shall long remember.

We next visited the famous Dry Dock, at 87 Hunter's Point, on the bay. It is a marvelous work, which does the engineer, who planned and excavated it, infinite credit. It is cut in solid rock, originally the spur of a mountain, which projected into the bay. It is oval in shape, and looks like a vast stone trough. It is four hundred and sixty-five feet long, one hundred and twenty-five wide and forty-five deep, and receives the largest class of ships. It cost over a million of dollars, and belongs to a joint stock company. There is nothing like it, or that can equal it for convenience, elsewhere.

There are so many pleasant spots, villas and towns, in the vicinity of San Francisco, that it is quite impossible for me to describe the half of them. The truth is, it is a realm of natural beauty, so improved by art, as to baffle my descriptive powers. If you would know all about it, you must come and see for yourself; there is positively no other way of acquiring a true knowledge of this more than fairy land; and especially is this true of the eastern side of the bay. You can go over by steamer any hour in the day you please; and if you go once, you will be sure to go several times.

Oakland is the first town over the bay you will prefer to visit. It stands in about the same relation to San Francisco that Brooklyn does to New York. It is, as a place of residence, one of the most delightful I ever saw. Many of the leading merchants and professional gentlemen, who do business in San Francisco, reside here, and have built themselves palatial dwellings, with spacious lawns, gardens and orchards attached. The streets are broad, airy, and cleanly as a park. In fact, the town is but a park highly cultivated and ornamented with all that is beautiful in nature and in art; contains about seven thousand inhabitants; is rapidly advancing, and has a liberal sprinkling of fine churches and excellent schools. The name, Oakland, has been given it because it is located in the midst of an extensive grove of native evergreen oaks. Among its best schools there is one conducted by individual enterprise, in which a full course of literary and military instruction is combined. It is popular, and enjoys a generous patronage. We visited it and witnessed the military drill of the pupils. The exercises were exceedingly interesting, and performed with an efficiency, accuracy, and soldier-like bearing, that quite astonished us. It is a rare, good school.

Near Oakland, and on the same side of the bay, is Alameda, a rural town of ten or twelve hundred inhabitants, who reside in the midst of flower gardens and vineyards, and beautifully 89 cultivated

farms, and seem to enjoy all that it is possible for an earthly paradise to afford. Alameda is, in fact, the “Garden of the State.” The lands are level; the soil rich; the air pure and cool, yet summer-like the year round. It is distinguished for its numerous orchards of apples, pears, peaches and other fruits, as well as for its fine vineyards. Indeed every kind of fruit and vegetable that can be desired, grows here in great perfection and abundance. The live oak is scattered over the plain, giving to the entire region the appearance of being an old apple orchard, for the reason that this species of oak looks exactly like an aged appletree. This grove land is called in the Spanish language the “Encinal.” Yet it is a cultivated land of fruits and flowers and happy homes.

While here we were entertained at the house of a friend, who is a distinguished lawyer, doing business in San Francisco. He has an accomplished lady for a wife, and a fine family of promising children, almost “too numerous to mention,” and is evidently one of the happiest men alive, amid all his cares and responsibilities. His house is a spacious one, furnished in modern style, and located in a ten-acre garden, which is cultivated to a high degree in all that is not only useful, but rare and beautiful. It was late in October when 90 we were there, and at that time apples and pears had ripened and fallen to the ground, and were so abundant that they could neither be sold nor given away. We passed orchards in which there were thousands of bushels of apples and pears lying on the ground and going to decay; the very best, largest and finest fruit I ever saw. It was a pitiful sight. But we were told that it cost more to send them to market than they would bring, though the distance by rail and steamer to San Francisco is only twelve miles. It seems almost incredible that such a waste of fruit should be permitted so near a large city, where it could be sold at moderate prices, were not the freights so exorbitant. It is evident that California needs an increase of transportation facilities.

The little village of Hayward, twenty-two miles south-east of San Francisco, is somewhat noted for its hot springs, which are medicinal and often visited by invalids. The village is cheaply built, with small frame buildings, standing two or three feet high from the ground, on wooden blocks or stilts. The earthquake of October 21st, 1868, destroyed, it was said, most of the town. The buildings were not in fact destroyed, but merely thrown from their legs to the ground. It was a sort of a vibrating wrestle with an earthquake, which the denizens did not much relish. 91 Everybody was frightened,

but nobody hurt. Yet it was one of the most violent shocks of earthquake known on this part of the Pacific coast for many years. It was severely felt at several points. The electrical currents, or forces, seemed to move in belts. In an extensive meadow, at Alameda, the earth opened for several miles in a direction at right angles with a board fence, and closed up with such violence as to leave a ridge in the soil, resembling a double furrow turned by a plow. The fence at the point of intersection parted, and was no where else disjointed; but in the re-action did not reach its original position by two feet. Some one has more land there, now, than he purchased. Whose is it?

The shocks of the earthquake were more destructive in San Francisco than elsewhere. The currents of electricity passed in two distinct belts through the city. The range of the belts, or tracks, were nearly parallel, as marked by the damage that was done. In the business part of the city the walls of the brick buildings were in many instances cracked, or shattered, while some were prostrated in ruins, killing a few persons outright, and terrifying the citizens generally. The first shock occurred about the usual breakfast hour. This was the severest, and did not prove a desirable appetizer. The fashionables, 92 who board at hotels and sleep late in the morning, sprang from their beds and ran into the streets without making their toilettes, and enacted such a comedy as was never before witnessed. Every street was a theatre, and crowded to overflowing—seats free—yet every one was puzzled in knowing when to applaud. The ridiculous scenes which occurred, however, have been remembered, and will never cease to be the subject of merriment. And yet an earthquake is a serious matter. A Franklin disarmed the lightning, but who shall disarm the earthquake? Science may yet do it. Nothing is impossible.

LETTER XII.

LOS ANGELES, November 10th, 1869.

We left San Francisco on the 6th inst., and after a voyage by the coast steamer of two days and a half, entered the Bay of San Pedro, where we were transferred to a small class steamer and taken seven miles up the bay to Wilmington; thence by rail, twenty-two miles, to this ancient city. There is just now a great rush of travel to this and other towns along the coast, especially to San Diego,

where the Southern Pacific Railroad, as it is expected, will make its terminus. The steamer on which we came, left port with three hundred passengers, and was overladen with freight: the sea rough, and nearly all sick; some swore and some cascaded. On the way we saw a whale spouting and frolicking within two hundred yards of the ship. He frequently showed his back above water, and in spouting, gave us a good specimen of the fountain, when playing, in 94 our Cleveland Park. We stopped on the way at Santa Barbara for a short time, to deliver freight and receive passengers. It is an old Spanish town, of about six thousand inhabitants, located on the plain and hill-side, close to the bay. It is noted for having produced the largest grape vine known on the American continent. This celebrated vine has a main trunk eight feet high and fifteen inches in diameter, and throws off long branches, which take root and extend like the Banyan tree, covering a large space of ground. It was planted nearly a century ago, by a Spanish lady, and bore last year six tons of grapes. On the hill-side, near the limits of the town, stands an old cathedral, an imposing structure, built by the Jesuits almost a hundred years ago. It commands a fine view of the town; and the valley lands in its vicinity are rich and highly cultivated. Americans are now settling here so rapidly that speculation in lands has created a feverish excitement, not only in this locality, but along the entire coast.

Los Angeles is indebted to the Jesuits for its name, which means "The City of the Angels;" but judging from the specimens I have seen here, I should say that their visits have been "few and far between," unless angels are made up of mixed bloods, and of all colors, and sadly made up at that. Take it altogether, it is a unique old town, 95 full of oddities and whimsicalities. Half the population is Mexican, the other half American, English, Scotch, Irish, German, and the Lord knows what; yet there is a goodly number of intelligent, refined and accomplished people, who reside here and give tone to society. The learned professions appear to be overstocked, yet each is represented by some individuals of distinguished talent. The city, with few exceptions, is built in Mexican style, and wears a dilapidated look. It contains a population, they say, of about twenty thousand. The roofs of the houses are generally flat and the walls adobe. It is situated at the base of the foot-hills, about thirty miles from the line of the sea coast, and extends into the plain for a considerable distance. It includes within its limits many fine gardens, vineyards and orange groves. It is emphatically the

land of fruits and flowers, always fresh and fascinating. If not the first, it is the second edition of the true Garden of Eden.

The climate here is the finest in the world, never too hot and never too cold, but always equable and exhilarating. It never rains except in winter; the fruit trees, the gardens and the vineyards are ever flourishing, and commingle fruits and flowers in perennial profusion. The winter rains are nothing more than genial showers. In 96 fact, the winter is like our spring, when the leaves of the trees, and the buds and the flowers burst into life, and the fields become green.

In the vicinity there are several extensive orange and lemon groves, as well as vineyards and other fruits. The orange grove we visited contains twelve hundred and sixty trees, sixteen years old, and was laden with fruit in every stage of growth from buds and blossoms to ripe fruit. The average annual crop from each tree, we were told, yields a profit of seventy-five dollars. We also saw a grove of the English walnut, the annual product of which, per tree, was estimated at one hundred and twenty-five dollars. In addition to these they cultivate many other kinds of fruit with equal success, if not with equal profit, such as figs, olives, dates, limes, pears, peaches, and apples. It is here that the two climes, the temperate and the tropical, seem to overlap each other, and to vie with each other in the excellence and abundance of their productions.

From Los Angeles, which we regarded as our base, or central point, we made an excursion into the country, and visited several of the most extensive ranches within the circuit of a hundred miles, traveling in an open carriage. A ranch is simply an old Spanish plantation, containing usually from ten thousand to one hundred and 97 fifty thousand acres, and sometimes more; in or near the centre of which stands an old flat-roofed house, built of adobe, which is a large square mud brick, dried in the sun, instead of being burned in a kiln. The house is generally constructed in the shape of a parallelogram, inclosing an open court, and having on the outside an open portico. It is a queer looking sort of a mansion; yet, in the olden time, it possessed all the charms of a royal palace in the estimation of the populace. It was in palatial residences of this character, that the richer classes of the Mexicans and Spaniards took their ease and lived in comparative luxury, until the war with Mexico occurred, when they were annexed to the United States.

After the war they attempted to adopt American habits, and to live in American style; the result was, they became extravagant, and soon so encumbered their estates that they were obliged to sell them at nominal prices. The Americans were the purchasers, and obtained the lands, in many instances, as low as ten cents an acre. Some of these large tracts, thus obtained, are now worth from five to fifty dollars an acre. They compose the best lands in California, and extend in a chain of valleys from San Diego to San Francisco, and even along the entire coast of the State. The appearance of these ranch lands in the summer 98 and fall months is quite unlike the green fields we see in the Eastern States. Here the grasses acquire a rank growth after the rains in winter and during the early spring, and then become perfectly dry, still standing upright where they grew, and thus remain, for seven or eight months, during the rainless season, as dry and sweet as the best of hay preserved in a barn. While in this condition, these grasses are still rich and nutritive, and afford abundant feed for the vast herds of sheep, cattle and horses, that roam at large over the plains. In a word, Nature does the haying, and leaves man with little to do, except to guard his flocks and herds, and take it easy. The old grass remains sufficient and in good condition until the new grass appears under the influence of the early winter rains; it then falls, and in its decay, serves to enrich the soil.

We visited several ranches, and were not only politely received and entertained, but acquired an interesting, though brief, experience of ranch life. We remained nearly a week at the ranch, known as the San Joaquin. This ranch consists of one hundred and ten thousand acres, and is stocked with forty thousand fine-wooled sheep. In extent, it is one of the largest ranches south of Los Angeles, being some twelve miles wide by twenty long. It is mostly valley land, and stretches from 99 the foot-hills to the sea. In some of the hills, within its boundaries, mines of coal and quicksilver have recently been discovered, which promise to become valuable. The ranch is amply watered by springs, and a chain of small lagoons, extending through it, centrally, supposed to be a subterranean river, from the connection there is in the hidden currents that pass from one lagoon to another, and the tremulous character of the soil, which seems to rest on its surface. In some places, if you thrust a pole through the turf, it disappears at once, and is never seen again.

These lagoons terminate in a small bay, which extends from the ocean into the ranch about two miles. On the shore of this bay I saw a camp of Mexican fishermen, who were engaged in manufacturing oil from the carcasses of sharks, which they catch in abundance along the sea coast. The Mexicans make this a profitable business. They go out to sea in small boats, and catch the sharks by harpooning or shooting them, as they rise to the surface in their eagerness to swallow the bait flung to them. When caught, they are towed into the bay, and so great is the number of their skeletons lying about the camp, that the atmosphere, throughout the entire vicinity for miles, is rendered impure and even offensive. Nothing of this kind, I believe, can offend the olfactories of a Mexican.

100

The sheep with which this ranch is stocked, are subdivided in flocks of three thousand to five thousand, and each division placed in charge of a shepherd, who watches over them, by day and by night, like the shepherds of old, but with this difference, perhaps, that he gathers the sheep into a corral or pen at night, and then betakes himself to his eight-by-ten board cabin, next the enclosure, and there cooks, eats and sleeps as best he can, with no other associates than his sheep and faithful dog. His life is truly a lonely one, and yet he seems happy in the companionship of his sheep and dog, who understand his signs and his whistle, and even the import of his words, and obey him with a child-like confidence in his superior wisdom and intelligence. The annual clip of wool from the sheep of this ranch, is said to be about two hundred thousand pounds. It is of the finest quality, and sells at a high price in the eastern market. Add to the income from the wool the annual product of twenty thousand lambs, and it is easy to see that wool-growing is a very profitable business in California.

In some parts of the coast range, there are numbers of very extensive dairy ranches. One ranch in Marin county, containing sixty thousand acres, is stocked with over three thousand head of milch cows. Some fifteen or twenty other ranches keep from three hundred to a thousand head. The most productive part of the year for butter and cheese, commences in November and ends in June. After that period the grass dries up, and is converted into standing hay, under the influence

of a burning sun and cloudless sky. And yet it is said that a good milch cow will produce from a hundred and fifty to a hundred and seventy-five pounds of butter, annually, or nearly twice that amount of cheese.

The largest cheese ever made in the world, was made on one of these dairy ranches. It was made during the late war, and weighed four thousand pounds. It was sold in San Francisco at fifty cents a pound, for the benefit of the "Sanitary Fund." The butter, as well as the cheese, is manufactured by steam power. In this business, fortunes may be made or lost in a single year. Little things cannot be done in California; it must be great things or nothing.

LETTER XIII.

ANAHEIM, November 16th, 1869.

This is a beautiful little German city, "the loveliest of the plain," situated on the banks of the Santa Ana river. The name of the town combines the German word "home" with the name of the river. A German company purchased the site, consisting of one thousand acres, some fifteen years ago, and laid it out in city lots, with broad streets running at right angles. Each lot contains twenty acres, and is planted with a vineyard. In other words, it is a city of vineyards, and takes the lead in California as a wine district. The quality of its wine is excellent, and the amount annually produced, very large. The wine is sold by the pipe, and goes to dealers in San Francisco, who bottle it and put it into the market. They paid but twenty cents a gallon for the product of this year, and sell it bottled at the rate of three dollars per gallon. Much of it is shipped east.

103

We visited several of the vineyards, and were delighted with their beauty and the skill manifested in their culture. The cultivators say, however, that they are not paid for their labor at the present price of wine, and some of them have already introduced the raisin grape, and propose, hereafter, to grow raisins instead of wine. We saw some of the raisin grapes; the raisins made from them, are excellent, quite equal to the best Smyrna raisins. The process of manufacture is simple—nothing more than drying the grapes in the sun on a board platform, and then packing them in boxes.

The juices of the grape, in the process of drying, crystallize and coat the fruit with sugar. In this culture, women and children can be employed with equal advantage, and, for the product, there is everywhere a ready market at remunerative prices.

In one of the fruit orchards here, we saw an appletree loaded with the second crop of apples which it has borne this year. They were of medium size, and would ripen in January. The fruits in California, especially apples and grapes, are much milder in flavor than those grown in the Eastern States. Belmonts become nearly sweet, and Rhode Island greenings lose their acidity in a good degree, while grapes, of whatever variety, acquire a degree of sweetness which is almost sickening as compared with the eastern catawba.

In returning from the sheep-ranch to this vine-clad city, we crossed several large rivers, nearly half a mile wide, but with channels dry as a sand desert. In this country, most of the rivers become dry in summer, or so low that the water, what little there is at different points, sinks, and is lost in the sand; perhaps in underground currents. But, in the rainy season, the rivers often overflow their banks and flood the country, far and near, making it extremely dangerous to cross them with teams. As yet, there are no bridges or ferry boats. The quicksands in the beds of the streams, increase the danger of passing them. It often happens that horses, wagons, and all, go down, and sometimes are lost.

Southern California is almost entirely destitute of valuable timber. In some directions you might go a hundred miles and not be able to cut a walking stick. There are, of course, no fences. Everybody's herds and flocks graze where they please, unless watched by herders. It is bewildering to ride through the vast plains of tall grass and wild mustard, especially at this season of the year, when vegetation stands erect, though dead and dry as a stubble-field. The mustard grows seven feet high, and when mature, resembles a field of ripened rye. It is of good quality, and is often gathered and sold in the market at a handsome profit. Thousands of acres are densely covered with it, and in traveling through it, one is liable to get lost. The country is so level and smooth that you can drive a team in any direction you please. There are but few roads; in many parts of the country nothing more than trails or pathways. It seems to a stranger like an uninhabited land.

Wild game is very abundant. Innumerable squirrels, gray and black, burrow in the ground for want of trees, and may be seen running in all directions. The coyotes, a kind of wolf, are also numerous, and destructive among the sheep. In addition to these, there are deer, wildcats, bears and lions, among the foot-hills and higher mountains, and acres of wild geese flying in the air, or feeding along the lagoons and water courses. There are two distinct varieties of geese, the white and the black. We also saw rabbits in abundance, as well as multitudes of quails, hawks, crows, and buzzards. Blackbirds in flocks follow the sheep, and often light on their backs, picking the grass-seeds lodged in their wool, and riding along at leisure. The sheep submit with perfect indifference. It is a novel sight.

Beside all this variety of game, there are plenty of wild hogs running about in the marshes 106 and brush thickets. They belong to anybody who can catch or kill them. In some parts of this region we saw hundreds of acres of corn, as stout as ever grew, for which there is no market. As many as one thousand and forty kernels have been known to grow on a single ear. Pork brings a high price, and so for want of tame hogs to consume the corn, the ranchmen catch and fatten the wild ones, and thus make their corn crops available. Hunting and catching wild hogs is an exciting business, and requires skill and experience. They are pursued with trained dogs and lassoed. This is rare sport for a Mexican.

We had thought of visiting San Diego, the border town in Southern California, but on meeting with a reliable personal friend, who had just returned from there, and who gave us a particular description of the place and its vicinity, we abandoned the idea. The part known as the "old town," is located some distance from the harbor, and is settled principally by Mexicans. It is built of adobe, with a broad common, or plaza, in the center. The bay is said to be as commodious and safe as that of San Francisco. The Southern Pacific Railroad is to terminate here, and make a direct connection with the Asiatic trade. When this is done, San Diego must become the formidable rival of San Francisco. In anticipation of 107 this result, speculators from abroad are concentrating here, and purchasing lands and city lots at extravagant prices. In fact, several new towns along the line of the bay have been platted and built within the last six months. The houses are of the most temporary

character, little else than board cabins; yet they command an exorbitant rent, and sell at fabulous prices. It is said that parties in the railroad interest have not, as yet, made any investment here in real estate, but have viewed the ground, and doubtless know what they intend to do, and at what point on the bay the road will terminate. Neither at the old or new towns is the water deep enough to admit a first class ship to approach nearer shore than half a mile. There is a point some five or ten miles up the bay, where the water is deep enough for the largest ships to approach close to shore, and there, as our friend says, the future town will be built and the road terminate.

The future of San Diego is destined to be brilliant. Its bay is capacious, and being the terminus of the southern trans-continental railway, it cannot fail to become, at least, the second great city of the Pacific coast. At present, it is impossible to ascertain the exact point where the projected railway will terminate; yet the land speculators are purchasing and selling city lots to each other, and surveying new cities along the line of the bay, for miles away from actual settlements. Money is plenty, and fortunes are said to be made in a day. This may be true in a very few instances. But the expenses of living have become extravagant, for the reason that there is a scarcity of provisions and of hotels. The surrounding country is, for the distance of forty miles or more, nothing but a sand desert, on which not even a blade of grass, or shrub, or plant grows, except the cactus. In some directions the territory is so encumbered by this bristling plant—the terror of man and beast—that it costs from twenty-five to thirty dollars an acre to clear it.

The country, generally in this region, is as barren as the desert of Sahara. Some attempts have been made to sink wells, but without much success. It is claimed, however, that the soil, though nothing but white sand, will produce grain, fruits and vegetables in perfection, if irrigated. But as there are no living streams of water, this cannot be done to any considerable extent. Rain seldom falls, and what is still worse, a hot wind, a periodical sirocco, generated in the vast sand deserts of Arizona, comes sweeping over the plains, and along the coast in the direction of San Diego, withering every green plant, vegetable and tree, which you attempt to rear by the process of irrigation. In an agricultural point of view, the lands are worthless. Yet the railway, when completed, will bring the needed supplies, and in time, build up at this point a great commercial city.

LETTER XIV.

LOS ANGELES, November 18th, 1869.

From Anaheim we returned by stage to this ancient City of the Angels. Myself, wife, and an Englishman were the only passengers who took seats in the coach at Anaheim. The coachman, accompanied with an armed guard, sat on the outside. The distance between the two cities is about forty miles, and the region through which we had to pass, is for the most part wild and uninhabited. A few weeks prior to this time the stage coach had been waylaid on this route, and all the passengers robbed of their money and other valuables.

When we arrived at the first station, a man of middle age took passage with us. His manner of entering the coach and his general appearance, were anything but prepossessing. He looked rough, seedy and sunburnt, but said nothing. I soon discovered that he carried in a leathern belt, 111 beneath his coat, a bowie knife and pistol, which, in his restless movements, were exposed to view. This gave the Englishman, as well as myself and wife, some uneasiness in regard to his real character and intentions. His face wore a fiendish expression, as he scanned us occasionally with a critical eye. He seemed puzzled to determine in his own mind who we were, or where to place us. At last, addressing first the Englishman, and then myself, he asked where we resided. The Englishman replied at Los Angeles. Regarding this as the most politic reply, I made the same answer. He evidently doubted, but made no further enquiries. We were now passing the most desolate part of the route, a marshy tract of country, full of ambuscades. Here he thrust his head, every few moments, outside the coach, looking this way and that way, intently and anxiously, as if expecting aid or pursuit, and then would nervously place his hand on his pistol and adjust it to his right side, where he could readily grasp it at any moment.

In a short time we emerged into an open plain of vast extent, bordered by the spurs of the neighboring mountains on our right. Here we saw two sinister looking Mexicans, who were mounted on horses and belted with pistols, heading in the direction of the mountains. Our seedy fellow-passenger watched their movements with intense 112 interest, and with evident

disappointment. Why they were objects of so much interest to him, or what connection they might have had with him, is more than I can say. But his appearance and the circumstances gave us unpleasant impressions, and, in fact, somewhat alarmed us. The Englishman, like myself, was unarmed. He had but recently arrived from England, and was possessed of considerable money, which he desired to invest in California lands. This I had learned from him before leaving Anaheim, and thought it possible the fact might be known to our suspicious looking fellow-passenger. But when we reached the outskirts of the city, he leaped like a tiger from the coach and disappeared. We all felt relieved, and congratulated ourselves on the happy riddance. The next day we heard that he was one of the bandits who, a few weeks previously, had waylaid the stage in the night, at a point near the city, and plundered the passengers. He had agreed, it was said, to turn State's evidence against his associates in crime, who had been arrested, and thus secure his own escape from the penalties of the law. For having made this agreement, he probably feared assassination by the hand of some one who belonged to the same secret organization as himself. It was mainly on his testimony that his comrades were convicted, and sent in chains to 113 the penitentiary. In a few weeks afterwards the witness himself was shot by some unknown person, and left to die by the wayside, near the identical spot where he had assisted in committing the original robbery.

While remaining at Los Angeles, we visited some of the spots of the most interest—the court house—the old cathedral, built in 1773, and the hill that overlooks the town, where Gen. Fremont, in the war with Mexico, entrenched the forces under his command, and held the city in subjection. The entrenchments are still to be seen. While here, the General observed symptoms of revolt in the movements of the Catholic priesthood, on a Sunday, at the church, under the guise of religious services; and seeing armed men passing in and out, ordered a cannon shot to be fired in that direction, which struck the gable-end window and passed through the church, in the walls of which the ball-hole still remains visible. The result was a grand scare, short prayers, and a sudden exit of the congregation. This unexpected mixture of prayers and powder did not agree very well with either the religious views or patriotic feelings of the Mexicans. The last battle with the Mexicans, which occurred in this region, was fought on the banks of the river San Gabriel, within a few miles of the city. This proved decisive. Annexation 114 soon followed. But many of the richer Mexicans

disliked annexation, and removed to Mexico. Those who remained, still retain their former habits and customs. Their principal occupation seems to be idling, gambling, racing, cock-fighting and drinking.

The main street of the city is about a mile long. The south half is occupied almost exclusively by Mexicans; the north half mostly by Americans. The style of building distinguishes very plainly the difference in taste and character of the two nationalities. In the immediate neighborhood of the city are several very fine fruit orchards and gardens, which are much visited and admired by strangers. We have met, while here, several southern gentlemen, who were distinguished officers in the war of the Rebellion, and who have located themselves on ranches near Los Angeles, and are now engaged in growing wool and fine horses. They are gentlemen in every sense of the word, and submit to the new condition of things with becoming grace and a genial temper. They say they prefer a whiteman's government, and confidently predict that negro-freedom will prove a failure—a misfortune, alike, both to the white and the black race.

The Union Hotel has the lead. Here we find the best of company and the best of 115 accommodations. There are several other good hotels, all of which, as well as the Union, are overflowing with guests at the present time. You will see here but very few ladies, either at the hotels or on the streets. There is just now a rush of adventurers and land speculators to this point, who are attempting to make fortunes by overreaching each other. Yet we have noticed the arrival of some families, who propose to become permanent citizens. City lots have advanced rapidly within the last few months, and the prospect of a railway connecting San Diego and Los Angeles with San Francisco, has had a magic effect in directing public attention to this region. The citizens here are jubilant, and seem disposed to indulge in extravagant expectations. As yet, however, business appears to be done on a limited scale. The merchants, small and large, occupy main street. More than half the shops are devoted to the sale of fruits, refreshments, or whiskey, interspersed with an undue proportion of gambling saloons. In and about these shops you meet with all nationalities, and a mixture of all colors. Nearly all the living languages of Europe, Asia and America, are spoken here. It is somewhat difficult to distinguish the Indians from the Mexicans, the two races have become so intermixed. There is a large ranch, consisting, as we are told, of a hundred thousand 116

acres or more, situated just north of the city, which is owned by an Indian, an old chief, who refuses to sell it or any part of it to a white man, fearing if he were to do so, that some sudden calamity would befall him and the remnant of his race. This refusal seriously retards the progress of the city, as well as the adjoining country. The old chief lives on a slender income from his herds of cattle and horses, or rather from the few which are not stolen from him. The white citizens are attempting to force him to sell his lands, by laws imposing a high rate of taxation.

Los Angeles is the central point of business operations in Southern California. The lands that surround it are fertile and desirable, and must eventually become valuable. In fact, all the valley lands among the neighboring mountains are rich in point of soil, and only wait the advent of the agriculturalist to give ample evidence of their capabilities and productions. About sixty miles southeasterly from the city, there is an extensive tract of rich, level land, known as the San Bernardino Valley. The climate is delightful the year round, and thither the swelling tide of emigration, with a view to actual settlement, is at present directed. Every one who has visited this beautiful valley, speaks of it in glowing terms. The lands can be obtained at Government price, 117 or by acquiring pre-emption rights. There is more or less valuable timber to be found in the gorges of the mountains, and much of the land can be irrigated by diverting the natural streams of water.

But, at present, the valley is somewhat difficult of access, and far from market. The roads are simply trails, and exceedingly rough along the mountain passes. Yet a good many families have already settled there, and will ultimately realize their most sanguine expectations, if one may judge from the expression of common sentiment in regard to the promising future of that region. The adjoining mountains are said to be rich in mineral wealth, such as coal, gold and iron. Our stage acquaintance, the Englishman, had visited this valley, and was quite enchanted with its fertility and beauty. He regretted the want of law and order, and related an occurrence which took place while he was there. A traveler, on horse-back, while approaching the valley through a mountain gorge, was attacked by three ruffians, robbed of his money, watch, horse and clothing, and left to find his way, as best he could, to some habitation. In the wilder portions of California, crimes of this character are committed almost daily. Pistols and pluck are the only safe-guards on which you can rely in

such emergencies. It is 118 never safe here to go unarmed, or travel alone, especially if you are well dressed, or display golden ornaments on your person.

Here I must conclude for the present. At eleven this morning we leave the city for San Francisco; by rail to Wilmington, and thence by sea. It is Thanksgiving Day, and I know not where we shall dine; certainly not with our old tried friends at home. Pleasant, indeed, are the many reminiscences connected with the thanksgivings of the past; the intermingling at the old homestead of youth and age, eating, drinking, laughing, joking, dancing and story-telling. O, that I were at home and young again—wouldn't I have a gay old time of it? Good bye!

LETTER XV.

SAN FRANCISCO, December 5th, 1869.

We came up the coast on the steamer Orizaba, having left Los Angeles on thanksgiving day. The sea was rough, and soon after stepping on board, we concluded to defer eating our thanksgiving dinner till next year. We tried to take it easy, but felt very uneasy, and, in all we had to say and do, manifested a critical taste, decidedly squeamish. In fact, we were in a critical mood—moodish—and remained so for nearly three days, when we lifted up our eyes and beheld the Golden Gate, the gate of deliverance, feeling truly thankful that there is such a thing as dry land.

On the way I took but few notes, and saw but little worth noting. A screaming flock of seagulls, a shark and a brigade of porpoises followed the ship during the entire voyage. We amused ourselves in looking over the taffrail at the gliding porpoises, and in flinging fragments of food 120 overboard to the seagulls, who would descend like a flock of hungry chickens, and seize, in a moment, the floating morsels.

The line of the coast, for nearly the whole distance of four hundred miles, is abrupt, chalky and barren. It has neither grass, nor tree of any kind growing upon it. It is bordered by a range of hills and broken mountains, which subside, at different points, as they approach the sea, into table lands of considerable extent. The coast is uninhabited, with the exception of a small town or two, and

so monotonous as to weary the eye with its uniformity. About the only landmark of any interest, is Point Concepcion, the spur of a foot-hill thrust into the sea, and on the brow of which stands a Government lighthouse, with a large bell swinging in its tower. When our steamer rounded the point, the lighthouse bell was merrily rung by way of paying the customary salute.

In San Francisco, as well as elsewhere, there are wise men—prophets who utter their annual predictions. They say that earthquakes may be expected these days. The serve earthquake, which occurred here on the 21st of October, 1868, was so peculiar in its character, as to attract the attention of scientific men, who, in attempting to investigate the true cause, have advanced some ingenious theories.

121

The prevailing modern idea seems to be that earthquakes result from electrical action in the earth's crust, or in the atmosphere, simultaneous, perhaps, in both. We know that electricity is an invisible force, active or quiescent, and abounds everywhere, in a positive or negative state. When the equilibrium has been disturbed, whatever the cause, it is certain that it will be restored by a like cause. The action of the electrical forces may or may not be instantaneous. The earth is said to be a great electrical reservoir, and so, in all probability, is the atmosphere; the one positive, the other negative, generally, or at points; yet always accumulating force, quietly, or violently, in the vain endeavor to restore a perfect equilibrium. Hence, we have thunder and lightning overhead and earthquakes under foot. The forces are the same. The one is a skyquake, the other an earthquake. The one would seem to be a substitute for the other, as in California, where they never have thunder and lightning, but are amply compensated by frequent earthquakes. For eight or nine months in the year they are favored with a bright sun and a cloudless sky. When the rainy season commences, it brings with it violent electrical changes, resulting not in thunder and lightning, but in earthquakes. In this way, it may be presumed, the equilibrium is restored. 122 Fearful as earthquakes may seem, I doubt not, many more persons are killed by lightning than by earthquakes. The subtle influences of electricity are, indeed, mysterious, and doubtless constitute the life-principle which pervades all life, whether it be animal or vegetable.

The State of California is destined to become one of the richest in the Union. Its present population is estimated at six hundred thousand. The aborigines number about forty thousand, but diminish rapidly, and will soon disappear. In natural resources, the State is not exceeded by any equal extent of territory in the world. The valleys and foot-hills extending from the southern to the northern limit of the State, are but a succession of inexhaustible wealth, awaiting the labor and skill of American enterprise to develop it. Here is silver, and gold, and bread, in abundance; enough for everybody who is ready and willing to work. The only condition imposed, is intelligent labor. Nature has done her part, and now invites man to do his part. There are but two serious objections to the country; one is the want of timber, and the other the want of timely rains and more living streams. There are some places in the mountains, where red wood and pine abound, which make excellent lumber for building and fencing purposes. The California laurel is a beautiful 123 wood, receives a fine polish, and is much used for cabinet work. Yet much of the timber is quite inaccessible, and the transportation of such as can be obtained, is exceedingly expensive. Not a ranch or farm in the State, so far as I could see or learn, is fenced. There are but few living springs of water. Many of the few living streams are so impregnated with alkali, as to render the water unwholesome and dangerous for man or beast to drink. Here and there, where a farmer can control a mountain stream, and divert its waters into small channels so as to flow his lands, he can obtain luxuriant crops of every kind, grain and fruits, in the highest perfection. Yet, the cost of erecting plank flumes and of cutting channels, requires an outlay which but few adventurers can afford. In some localities artesian wells have been obtained at moderate expense. Horticulture in the vicinity of the larger towns proves to be a profitable pursuit. The gardeners, who are devoted to growing vegetables for the market, require a regular supply of water, which they obtain from ordinary wells and elevate into tanks by a windmill pump, and then conduct it by plank flumes and earth channels through every part of their grounds. By this means fresh vegetables and the small fruits can be grown and the towns supplied throughout the year. The process of planting 124 and gathering at the same time, and in the same gardens, never ceases. Corn, peas, beans, and other vegetables are planted every month, and gathered every month, and may be seen along side of each other at all times, in their

various stages of growth. Only think of it, strawberries fresh from the vines every day in the year, and that too, in abundance. Isn't it a wonderful country?

The periodical winds are somewhat disagreeable, and prevail a considerable portion of the year. No fruit tree or ornamental tree can be grown without artificial irrigation and protection against the action of these prevailing winds. You must either build high board fences to protect the trees, or plant them in some valley or on some hill-side, where they will not be exposed. Nearly every tree in California leans in the direction of the prevailing winds. So you can always tell "which way the wind blows," by looking at the trees, if not by observing the laws of trade.

Almost everybody here is a speculator, especially in San Francisco, where they are constantly engaged in speculating among themselves in city lots. In fact, they have done so much at it, and at such exorbitant rates, that they have completely shingled the city over with mortgages. They have been stimulated by the idea that eastern capitalists, now the Pacific railway is 125 completed, are coming with a rush to purchase most of the city, at any price. The quicker this idea explodes, the better. The inevitable result of all this must be, that property will change hands at greatly reduced figures.

In California you can regulate the climate to suit yourself. In the valleys, it is perpetual summer. In the mountains, you can have all the changes of the four seasons. In one day's travel you can reach a region where it is spring, summer, fall, or winter, as you may prefer. It is, therefore, a glorious country for invalids, as well as for people in sound health. Here you have all the luxuries, fruits, flowers and vegetables, which either a temperate or tropical climate can produce. What more can one wish or desire? Yet here, as elsewhere, I believe no one is fully satisfied with his condition in life.

The Asiatics having espied out this "goodly land," are now arriving in great numbers, with a view to share its wealth and test its capabilities. Here they say they can grow tea, silk, sugar and spices as well as in their own country. The land is cheaper and much more fertile. The cheap table lands they regard as admirably adapted to the silk and tea culture. In a few years, I doubt not, the foothills and elevated table lands will be crowned with the tea plant and the mulberry, and 126 the

valleys enriched with extensive fields of sugar cane. But the Americans will still retain their power and controlling influence; monopolize the best lands, and take the lead in all lucrative enterprises. They will still plan, invent, and conduct the commerce of the country. The Asiatic element will do no harm, but on the contrary, aid in promoting a rapid development. In view of what has already been achieved, it may be said, that the future of California knows no limit. Yet here, as well as elsewhere, fluctuations in business affairs, and in the value of property, often occur. "All is not gold that glitters."

LETTER XVI.

SAN FRANCISCO, December 7th, 1869.

It cannot be doubted that California presents more points of natural beauty and sublimity than any other part of the known world. It abounds in marvels and originalities. Among the principal points of interest to the tourist, are the Yosemite Valley, the Big Trees, and the Geysers. The first is indescribable; the second incredible; and the third infernal; and yet they all actually exist. Everybody who reads, knows as much about them as I do, and perhaps more. Owing to the lateness of the season, I did not visit them; but have heard them described so often, by friends who have visited them, that I can readily imagine how they appear, and especially so, since these masterpieces of Nature's work have many duplicates, scarcely less magnificent, which I have seen. Yet the Yosemite Valley will always be spoken of by tourists in a style of grandiloquence, which might induce one, very properly, to question their veracity, if not their sanity.

This wonderful valley may be described as ten or twelve miles long and half a mile wide, made by splitting a mountain range through the back-bone, to the depth of five or six thousand feet; then leveling the base by filling in soil and planting it with grass, shrubs and flowers, and penciling it with silver rills and rivulets that originate in outside fountains, and come dashing over the valley's rocky rim, as if their glittering currents fell direct from Heaven, creating a mist or spray resembling a bridal veil. The valley has ever been regarded by the Indians as Nature's Sanctuary, where the Great Spirit dwells. But now you find here several hotels, filled, in summer, with visitors, who

devote themselves to sight-seeing, frolic and fun, dancing, cards and billiards. These unsanctified intrusions on Nature's hallowed retreat, I should think, would incur her displeasure, if not shock her moral sense.

There are some twenty groves of the big trees, which have been discovered in different parts of California. The most noted are located in Mariposa and Calaveras counties. The largest trees are thirty-five feet in diameter, three hundred feet high, and the bark two feet thick. A hollow one that has fallen, will admit sixteen men on 129 horseback very comfortably. In ascending its fallen trunk you have to climb a ladder forty feet long. A few years ago a section of one of these hollow trees was shipped to London, set on end, and used as a drinking saloon. It proved a profitable investment. The distance from San Francisco to Yosemite and the big trees, is nearly one hundred and fifty miles, and to the Geysers, about sixty miles. In visiting the Geysers, your moral courage will be put to the severest test. The descent into the yawning gulf is made by a stage coach, driven by an expert, and is not only very precipitous, but hazardous. Still no serious accident has, as yet, happened. When you reach this "lower region," you find yourself in a narrow canyon, about half a mile long, surrounded by wizard nooks and angles of the wildest character, and standing on fiery billows that roll beneath your feet. Scalding jets of steam ascend at a hundred different points about you, as if leaping from a caldron boiling beneath the soil. In many places you cannot step without burning the soles of your boots. The springs of hot and cold water are so near each other, in some localities, that you can thrust one hand into hot and the other into cold water, at the same time. In many spots on the surface of the soil there is an issue of noxious gases, where sulphur deposits itself in considerable 130 quantities. The first discoverer of this wonderful canyon, which is, probably, a volcanic crater of ancient date, supposed, when he discovered it, that he had reached the outside door or portico of the infernal regions, and thus impressed, fled in dismay, and could never be persuaded to make a second descent.

Everywhere in the mountains of the Pacific Slope, you will see marked evidences of volcanic action. The soil is red, and the rocks appear to have been subjected to intense heat, and are sometimes vitrified. The Great Salt Lake Valley has the appearance of being the volcanic subsidence of a mountain chain—a vast crater that has been filled in with soil, abraded in the

course of time from the adjoining mountains and elevated plains. The lake occupies the central portion of the original crater, and is still growing narrower by the influx of soil. On the sides of the mountains that encircle it, there remains a distinct water-mark, at an elevation of several hundred feet, showing, beyond a doubt, that this was, at some former period, the boundary line of its waters. From this fact, it is evident that the lake has subsided, or that the bordering mountains have been elevated by some sudden convulsion.

Amid the lofty mountains sloping into the State of Nevada, there sleeps a lake, called Mono, 131 about seventeen miles long and nine wide. It has no outlet, and is a perfect Dead Sea. No animal life can exist in it. Its waters are composed of chemical constituents, which decompose all animal substances in a short time. In other words, it is a sea of potash held in solution, of the strongest kind. The body of a man who was drowned in it, and even his clothing and boots, were almost entirely consumed in the course of a few weeks. It is a modern wonder. The seven wonders of the world, as known to the ancients, amount to nothing as compared with the almost innumerable wonders of the Pacific Slope.

In traveling among the Sierras, the scenes that surround you, look where you will, are grand, vast, and sublime. It is there that Nature sits enthroned in sublimity; eloquent in her silence; pure in her sympathies; and divine in her sway. It is there that she has lifted mountains to the skies, and sunk valleys to invisible depths. It is there that she has buried dead rivers in mountains that were once valleys, and given birth to living rivers in valleys that were once mountains. Her volcanoes, scattered here and there, are but the chimneys of her workshops. The wealth of her sublime empire is not only vast, but inexhaustible. In fact, every mountain is a bank of deposit. Whatever she does financially, she does on a specie 132 basis, and is ever ready to help those who are disposed to help themselves.

Throughout the Pacific Slope you will find, almost at every step, something new; something that will surprise you. It is a region entirely unlike that of the Atlantic Slope. In the Sierra Nevada range there are more than a hundred mountain peaks that pierce the heavens, rising, in some instances, to the height of fourteen or fifteen thousand feet. One of the highest is Mount Shasta, a giant,

that seems to recline his head, like a child, on the bosom of God. In this mountain frame-work of California, you catch a glimpse of that great temple which was built without hands. It is here, in these cerulean halls, that Sublimity and Beauty take their social walks, and, stooping, smile on the cradled valleys that slumber at their feet. In some places you would think everything about you in a state of chaos. It looks as if great masses of matter still remained on hand after the work of creation had been finished. On entering a region of this character, my first thought was, that I had caught Nature at work in her laboratory, moulding the mountains into shape, scooping out the valleys, channeling the rivers, and planting here and there a few favorite evergreens. I really felt as if I had blundered into her presence without rapping, or giving her an opportunity to make 133 her toilette. But I soon discovered that Nature does not stand on ceremony, and that her native beauty is like that of an artless maiden, “when unadorned, adorned the most.”

Dead rivers, as known to miners in California, are such as have been dried up and sealed up, midway, in the mountain ranges by volcanic action. Their channels are reached by tunneling into the mountain sides, and are found to contain sand beds, worn stones, and rich deposits of gold, in the form of gold dust and nuggets. It is said that more than half the gold mined in California, has been taken from these dead rivers. They lie at about the same height, and have been traced hundreds of miles.

Nearly three-fourths of the population on the Pacific coast are unmarried men, who would be very glad to ennoble their manhood, if they had the opportunity. In this connection, I might as well say as think, that if the supernumerary women of the Eastern States, who are now clamoring for their rights, would but emigrate to this golden land, they would find it not only a golden land, but would soon be able, like the Roman matron, to point to their jewels with a commendable pride, and, perhaps, realize the fact that “a curtain lecture,” now and then, is vastly more effective than public lectures, in securing and preserving “woman's rights.”

134

And now let me say, if you want to see a new world, go to California. You can go by rail from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in seven to eight days, running night and day, at the rate of about twenty-five

miles an hour. After the second day out, you will not tire, if you take a sleeping car; for you then become accustomed to the change; sleep well, eat well, and enjoy a kind of home-life. The passing scenes, as you gaze from the car windows, appear like a revolving panorama, and constantly present to the eye novelties of intense interest. You can get regular meals at the stations on the way, with the exception, perhaps, of two days, while crossing the interior mountain plains. Even there, you may rely on getting at least one good "square meal" a day. At some points the water is objectionable, being too alkaline to be drinkable with safety.

By taking the lightning express train, which makes the through trip once a week each way, and has a dining car attached, you will be accommodated with every "creature comfort" you could possibly desire, and would be led to think, while on the route, that you were merely boarding at a fashionable hotel, and enjoying the best of society. Select parties, generally, prefer this train; but I should much prefer the daily express. There is some difference in the expense, but not much in the running time. The sleeping cars attached to either train are equally elegant and palatial. In taking the daily express, you meet with well bred people, and can make, if you choose, very agreeable acquaintances. Besides, you can do as you please, eat at the stations, or resort to your own supplies. "Variety," you know, "is the spice of life."

If you intend to make the trip, I should advise you to take along with you a basket of lunch, a flask of brandy, and a pocket pistol. If you have a wife, take her also; if you have none, marry at once, and make it your bridal trip. A gentleman who is accompanied with his wife, is sure of being treated with consideration; but if he travels without a lady in charge, he must expect to be regarded as of little more consequence than so much freight. A word to the wise ought to be sufficient.